

# Hamilton County Education Summit



**COMPREHENSIVE REPORT 2004**

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HAMILTON COUNTY  
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY MAYOR

208 Courthouse  
Chattanooga, Tennessee 37402

CLAUDE RAMSEY  
County Mayor

Dear Friends:

When I announced the Education Summit in June 2003, none of us had any idea how much energy was waiting to be unleashed. This was soon evident when 8,000 citizens filled out surveys and 1,500 people attended public forums to share ideas on how to build a model school system.

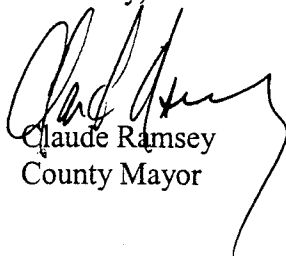
From that work, we established some goals for ourselves: we want our children to be able to read at grade level; we want our high school students to graduate ready for the next step in their lives – whether it is work or college. We want our parents involved in their children's education from an early age, and we want a broad-based commitment from the people of Hamilton County to achieve excellence in education.

Task forces were created to address key issues. The volunteers who served on those committees gave their time generously and with a sense of urgency. Their findings and recommendations are the core of this report.

The Summit has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my public career. It has demonstrated our citizens' concern for education and our children. There is a renewed feeling that the vision of a model system can and will be realized. Now, it is up to all of us to make sure that happens.

To all of you who responded, to all who served, and to all who care, I extend heartfelt thanks. This was a labor of love. The children of Hamilton County thank you.

Sincerely,



Claude Ramsey  
County Mayor

## **HAMILTON COUNTY EDUCATION SUMMIT**

*Recognizing the importance of our schools, County Mayor Claude Ramsey asked our citizens to participate in envisioning and molding a community approach to improve the education of our children. The citizens of Hamilton County responded to this call in a series of public forums and surveys.*

*They came to meetings at Howard, Red Bank, Ooltewah and eight other locations. They spoke, sharing concerns over the future of our school system. They served as volunteers at meetings and on task forces assigned the job of translating concerns into plans.*

*Today, these citizens challenge our educators; they challenge our parents, business community, and institutions of higher learning. They also challenge our elected officials to make the dreams of the Education Summit a reality.*

*The Hamilton County Education Summit reflects the conviction that future progress and prosperity are dependant on our determination to demand the best education for our students. They came, they spoke, they served, and they challenged. Our children await the answer.*

### **The Vision**

Mayor Claude Ramsey proposed the Education Summit in a speech at the Chattanooga Convention Center when he accepted the award as the Chattanooga Area Manager of the Year in June of 2003. Based on the success of other community planning processes such as *Vision 2000*, Mayor Ramsey proposed the Summit employ a public dialogue as a means to develop a shared vision of what our education system can and should be.

He wanted the people of Hamilton County to build a shared vision in our community for the future of public education and to identify the resources and actions needed to carry it out. The vision was honed into a concise statement: *"To create a national model public education system that prepares students for success in the world."*

With growth and prosperity dependant on the success of public education, the participation of all citizens was needed in planning system improvements. The first step in this process was to open a community dialog.

### **The Dialog**

In September 2003, a community survey was sent out to encourage feedback from the public as well as the teachers, staff, and administration of the Department of Education. Forty thousand copies of the survey were sent home with students. The survey was published in the *Chattanooga Times Free Press* and made available on the County's website for Internet access, and it was publicized through press conferences, media releases, and billboards.

Surveys were distributed at city halls in area municipalities, malls, libraries, and recreation centers and to community organizations and elected officials. By the end of September, tabulation and analysis of the surveys began through the joint efforts of the Community Research Foundation and the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

The community dialog continued with a series of public forums at eleven schools across the County. The meetings successfully engaged over 1,500 participants in the discussion on public education. The visioning process utilized 99 Facilitators and 91 Scribes. With support functions, over 2,500 volunteer hours were donated to carry out the project. As a result of these meetings, 5,000 suggestions were recorded. This information was combined with 8,000 survey responses.

The written surveys and public forum comments revealed common themes, including:

- Qualified, effective teachers
- Safe, well-maintained facilities
- Student access to current technology and textbooks
- Parental involvement and support
- Community involvement and support for schools
- Analysis of finances and records
- Communications between parents and the schools
- Communication between the schools and the general community
- Dropout rates
- Challenging and effective curriculum

Based on the communities' issues and concerns, four ambitious goals were established:

- To have all students reading at grade level by the end of the third grade
- To achieve a 90% graduation rate with students ready for college or to enter the work force
- To involve parents, guardians, and other caregivers in the education of children, beginning at an early childhood;
- To generate broad-based commitment to a model public education system

### **The Task**

Mayor Ramsey appointed six task forces and charged them with developing a plan of action aimed at meeting the goals. Composed of community volunteers, the task forces included:

1. *Finance and Statistical Resources*, assigned to analyze school funding and provide a baseline for measuring change
2. *Teacher Recruitment and Retention*, assigned to develop measures to recruit and retain qualified, effective teachers
3. *Facilities, Technology, and Textbooks*, assigned to access the physical resources needed for education
4. *Community Involvement*, tasked to engage the community-at-large in the creation of a model system
5. *Parent Involvement*, created to improve communication and parental involvement in each child's education
6. *Curriculum and Reading*, assigned to recommend actions that improve reading skills, graduation rates, and other school programs

Over a four-month period, each task force conducted a series of weekly meetings, met regularly with the County Mayor, and assembled reports on their charge. Collectively, the task forces drew from the expertise of 128 volunteer members.

### **The Challenge**

Each task force has submitted a report to the County Mayor detailing their findings and recommendations. There are places where the recommendations intersect, but there is no instance in which they conflict. Together, the six reports provide an exciting and ambitious challenge for the people of Hamilton County, the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners, and the Hamilton County Board of Education.

# Finance & Statistical Resources Task Force

Chairman: Dan Johnson

# **FINANCIAL AND STATISTICAL RESOURCE TASK FORCE**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Financial and Statistical Resource Task Force was charged with researching, gathering and disseminating financial and statistical data relating to the Hamilton County education system including but not limited to the following:

- Reviewing relevant input and recommendations from the public surveys and community forums;
- Conducting a detailed review of the county school system's revenue and expenses;
- Identifying relevant trends in the system's funding; and
- Comparing local system revenue and expense to other school systems that approximate the local system in areas such as population size, demographic composition, growth patterns and public education initiatives.

The work of the task force was organized into two areas, budget analysis and central office. Members of the sub-committees were as follows:

### Budget Analysis

### Central Office

L. Dan Johnson, CPA – Task Force Chairman

Bill Elliott, CPA – Chairman

Gary Land

Lizetta Paturalski

Fred Skillern

Louis Wright, CPA

Lee Brouner, CPA

Dale Isabell, CPA

Christie Jordan, CPA

Lucile Phillips

Jeff Olingy – Chairman

Paul K. Brock, Jr.

John Riddell

David Roden

Barbara Medley

Marty Puryear

Bill McGriff, CPA

Dan Challener



## **Major Findings, Observations & Conclusions**

### **FUNDING GAP -**

There is a growing gap between the amount of revenues funding the Hamilton County Department of Education and the amount of expenditures for the Department. At the current rate, growth in funding from the State (through the BEP) and from the County (through natural growth in the property tax base and growth in collections of local option sales taxes) will not be adequate to fund the expected growth in expenditures. Without significant improvement in funding from the State, Hamilton County will be required to significantly increase property, sales or other taxes for education or the school system will have to make drastic cuts in personnel and services to balance its future budgets.

### **STATE OF TENNESSEE -**

The lack of fair and proper funding from the State of Tennessee is the most pressing problem facing Hamilton County public schools today. In addition to inadequate available funds provided by the State for education, the State equalization funding calculation for each Tennessee public school system further reduces State funding for Hamilton County Public Schools and thereby places a much heavier funding burden on local governments and residents.

We must not forget, the State of Tennessee has the primary responsibility for providing education for the children in Tennessee. It is impossible to put enough emphasis on the State of Tennessee's failure to provide adequate funding for educational opportunities for Tennessee's children.

The failure of the State to provide adequate funding for education is apparent upon review of the historical trend for the Hamilton County school system over the last seven years. State funding grew \$4,061,000 (4.7%) during the seven-year period from fiscal year 1998 through 2004. During this period, funding from

local property and sales taxes increased \$40,528,000 (40.5%). As you can see, the State provided very little support toward funding the increase in expenditures during this period of \$50,810,000 (26.9%). The difference between expenditures and revenues was funded primarily by the use of the school system's fund balance.

In fact, the State's BEP program and its equalization calculation have now placed the Hamilton County school system last in Tennessee for State funding per pupil.

The solution is two-fold. The State of Tennessee needs to 1) allocate significantly more resources toward education for all school districts and 2) redesign its equalization formula to more equitably allocate monies to address the unique problems of large urban school systems and to recognize actual local effort (such as Hamilton County).

#### HAMILTON COUNTY –

The Hamilton County Commission has funded the school system through an allocation of the local property tax and through use of 50% of its collections of the County's local option sales tax. Since the merger in 1997, the Hamilton County Commission has increased the percentage of the local property tax dollar allocated to operating the Hamilton County public schools by 13.8%.

The other major source of local funding for education has come from the local option sales tax, from which State law mandates that the County Commission provide at least 50% of the collections to the school system. Hamilton County recently increased its local option sales tax rate to 2.25%, and State law authorizes Hamilton County to increase the rate to a maximum of 2.75%.

Property taxes in Hamilton County are already perceived to be on the high end of the scale in relation to other counties in Tennessee. However, additional revenues are needed.

While raising the property tax to generate the additional revenues needed by the school system is a viable option, we suggest that the Hamilton County Commission also consider other potential sources of revenue that may be available.

For fairness and equity, another observation that was considered but not adopted:

A study should be implemented concerning the feasibility of transferring the taxing authority for local education funding from the County Commission to the Board of Education. This is a longstanding practice in other states, and the citizenry still maintains control since the Board of Education is publicly elected. Not only might such a transfer of taxing authority be more efficient but any public bickering and mistrust within the community with respect to the funding and spending of public funds for public education might be mitigated when the “buck stops” with one public body.

#### HAMILTON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION –

Hamilton County Schools is presently complying with all State regulations and financial reporting requirements; however, a major concern raised initially by the public survey and by members of the committee was the difference in per pupil cost between schools. Our analysis determined that differences and perceived inequalities may exist between schools when comparing per pupil costs. These differences can be explained and understood after researching available information about the school in question. Some of the explanations were smaller versus larger schools, BEP class size limits, more experienced staff and various others.

It was also determined that certain operational costs cannot, at this time, be traced back to each school. These costs are currently allocated equally among all students. Transportation and maintenance costs are a portion of this allocation. The committee concludes that the finance department of the school system should work closely with the finance department of the County to design an accounting system to code all operating costs to the school level. If a cost cannot be charged directly, the school system should find a statistically sound basis for allocation.

In analyzing the HCDE's central office, it became clear that the task of comparing Hamilton County Central Office numbers to other school districts throughout the country was going to be difficult, if not impossible. A large amount of educational data, not only in our county, but throughout the country, is self reported. Definitions, standards, and benchmarks vary not only from district to district, but also within a district. In one Education Department, maintenance workers can be housed within the Central Office, whereas in another district they can be assigned to schools and are accounted for within the employee base housed at that unit. With this lack of commonality, meaningful comparisons became impossible. Performance standards do not seem to exist beyond the boundaries of a specific school system. The committee concluded that it needed to look to outside providers for comparable district data. A discussion of this search is included in the sub-committee's exhibit.

The Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University is a nationally recognized organization that works closely with school systems throughout the country in performance improvement. One of the services they offer is a Central Office Review for Results and Equity (CORRE).

CORRE is not an audit, a consultant report, an external review nor any other practice commonly "done to" districts. Instead CORRE is done in collaboration with districts and requires a significant amount of staff time and engagement. Educators, Central Office Staff, Board Members, teachers and principals, as well

as community and business leaders work together to gather and analyze data on a key issue, and design action steps for improvements in Central Office practices.

The committee saw CORRE as an opportunity to compare Central Office with prudent business practices. Using this approach, we can engage our business leadership in helping our education partners to better manage. As an added benefit to this approach, the Carnegie Institute has agreed to cover the cost of this service as part of its support for Hamilton County's high school reform initiative.

Present plans call for the review to begin in May and conclude in November. The district will donate the time needed to support the process and Dr. Register is firmly in favor of it.

# Teacher Recruitment & Retention Task Force

Chairman: June McEwen



# **TEACHER RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT**

## **TASK FORCE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Teacher Retention and Recruitment Task Force was asked to create a plan designed to attract and retain highly qualified and effective teachers for every classroom in the Hamilton County School System.

This task was established in direct response to the community forums, during which participants identified the need to have caring, concerned and committed teachers in the Hamilton County classrooms.

The task force subdivided its task, creating three work groups:

- |    |  |                         |
|----|--|-------------------------|
| 1. | The Teacher                                | Dan Mayfield, Chairman  |
| 2. | The Teacher's Financial Support            | Bruce Long, Chairman    |
| 3. | The Teacher's Support Other than Financial | Sandra Miller, Chairman |

All work group activity was aimed at the fundamental tasks of recruiting, hiring and retaining effective teachers.

Obviously, the issues of recruitment and retention are inextricably linked. The system benefits (including compensation) that attract a candidate in the first place are going to help retain them once they have joined.

### **II. THE CHALLENGE**

Chattanooga faces an uphill battle when it comes to finding and keeping caring, concerned and committed teachers. Consider:

1. Hamilton County ranks dead last among Tennessee counties for the amount of state money returned to fund public education;

2. Tennessee already ranks in the bottom five of state funding for public education;
3. Hamilton County's salary schedule ranks 84<sup>th</sup> out of 136 Tennessee school districts for starting pay
4. Relatively high-paying teaching positions – with commensurately higher retirement benefits – are available just across the state line in north Georgia.

### **III. DEFINING EFFECTIVE TEACHERS**

Before wrestling with the best ways to recruit and retain teachers, the task force felt it worthwhile to identify the kind of teachers we should be recruiting in the first place. As a starting point, the committee established a working definition for an “effective teacher.” We settled on a set of characteristics that grew out of a Public Education Foundation study of 50 Hamilton County teachers who annually help their students post academic gains far greater than most county students. The foundation combined their local research with effective teacher characteristics identified in 30 years of national studies and determined that effective teachers very frequently have these things in common:

- They communicate clearly;
- They are structured, yet flexible and spontaneous;
- They think about and reflect on practice;
- They demonstrate good classroom management skills;
- They encourage interactions and allow low hum of conversation about activities or tasks;
- They have a high number of students actively engaged in the class continuously;
- They make effective use of entire classroom (e.g. teacher circulates in room to assist and assess students);
- They make use of a variety of teaching strategies and assessments;
- They use personal experiences as examples in teaching; and
- They relate lessons/activities/examples to current trends, culturally relevant and age appropriate.

*(Qualities of Effective Teachers, Stronge, 2002)*

In addition to these characteristics, the group adopted one other tenet originally set out in a 2000 Hay-McBer report. They agreed it should be understood: "All competent teachers know their subjects. They know the appropriate teaching methods for their subjects and curriculum areas and the ways pupils learn." (McBer, 2000).

#### **IV. FINDINGS**

##### **1. COMPENSATION**

It is important to understand the competitive realities that affect teacher recruitment and retention in Hamilton County, foremost among them our proximity to north Georgia, where the lottery-driven education revenues are fueling teacher salaries and benefits. Here are two telling examples:

#### **TENNESSEE/GEORGIA**

#### **COMPARATIVE TEACHER SALARY INCREASES**

#### **FROM 1995-96 TO 2003-04**

<b>School Year</b>	<b>Tennessee</b>	<b>Georgia</b>
1995-96	0%	6%
1996-97	3	6
1997-98	0	6
1998-99	2	3
1999-2000	2	6
2000-01	3.5	3
2001-02	2.5	4.5
2002-03	2	3.5
2003-04	0	0

Sources: Tennessee Education Association and Georgia Department of Education.

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Based on these percentage increases, a \$30,000 teaching job in Tennessee during 1994-95 increased to \$34,788 in 2003-04. In Georgia, the same \$30,000 teaching job in 1994-95 increased to \$43,459.

The total compounded increase during this period was TN – 16%; GA – 45%. The inflation rate during this period was 24%.

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## **CATOOSA COUNTY, GA – HAMILTON COUNTY, TN COMPARATIVE TEACHER PAY SCALE**

Degree Held	Years of Experience	Catoosa Salary	Hamilton Salary
B.S	0	\$30,641	\$28,239
B.S	15	42,275	41,793
M.S	0	35,540	32,475
M.S	15	49,033	46,029
ED.S	0	40,160	34,169
ED.S	15	55,408	47,723


Sources: Catoosa County and Hamilton County Departments of Education.

The entry salary rate in Catoosa County is 8.5% higher than Hamilton County with the salary gap widening to a 20% disparity as years of experience and academic credentials increase (see Resources Used- One). Compounding the problem is an eight-year-trend in wage increases for Hamilton County teachers that is roughly 40% of that of their counterparts in Catoosa County (4.75% average in Catoosa County vs. 1.87% in Hamilton County). These factors in combination are a formidable “one-two punch” positioning Hamilton County in a less than competitive ranking relative to recruitment and retention. Additionally, there are eight counties within reasonable driving distance of Hamilton County. Seven of these have higher starting salary scales. On a statewide basis, Hamilton County ranks 84<sup>th</sup> in starting salary among 136 school districts in Tennessee.

In addition, the task force conducted anecdotal Internet research and phone surveys to compare Tennessee's teacher retirement program with those of contiguous states. The findings included:

- Assuming 30 years of service and identical salaries, a retiring Georgia teacher will be paid \$548.00 more per month than the Tennessee teacher.
- Based on the same assumptions, retirement pay in the contiguous state other than Georgia is \$267.00 - \$907.00 more per month than in Tennessee.
- A teacher with a bachelor's degree can work for Hamilton County for 15 years, then work in Whitfield County for 15 years and make an extra \$366.00 per month at retirement.
- A teacher with a bachelor's degree can work for 20 years in Hamilton County and 10 years in Walker County and make \$166.35 per month more at retirement.

## 2. HUMAN RESOURCES STAFFING

The system currently has only 5 professional level human resources employees who are responsible for filling approximately 300 teaching positions, 1,150 -teaching positions, and 300 substitutes per year (1,750 total jobs). (By comparison, Hamilton County Government recruits for approximately 240 positions per year with 3 professional staff.) In addition to recruitment, the School System's Human Resources Department must also manage licensure issues which can be very complex and time consuming and are not part of the "normal practice" for most business or government Human Resource Departments.

Moreover, personnel managers are pulled between the immediate, on-demand need for employee relations services and the less urgent (though no less important) recruitment efforts. Typically, recruitment suffers in favor of the more urgent business of human resources.

Last, even if the managers were able to devote the time they should to teacher recruitment, there is some question as to the efficacy and efficiency of the processes used to evaluate recruitment and retention efforts.

### 3. SYSTEM TECHNOLOGY

The school system lacks up-to-date technology. For example, there is no accommodation for electronic applications – job applications are still generated on paper and handled through the central office, with no online sharing of information with the principals who may be doing the hiring. Personnel could inadvertently eliminate a candidate in whom a principal might otherwise be interested.

### 4. PRINCIPAL TRAINING

Since the characteristics of effective teachers have been identified, it is critical that Human Resources continue to work closely with principals who are skilled in interviewing and that they be given the tools to use in selecting teachers who possess the desired characteristics.

### 5. FOLLOW-THROUGH

Currently the application process can get bogged down and some applicants have difficulty getting status reports on their application or having phone calls returned. There is a danger that the system will lose applicants, including those who have been aggressively recruited, due to lack of follow-up.

### 6. MATH & SCIENCE TEACHERS

The school system is experiencing difficulty recruiting for higher-level math and science positions. Reportedly, some frustration exists on the part of teachers going through the alternate certification process, which can have an inhibiting effect on the recruitment of retired businesspersons considering the classroom as a second career.

Math, science, and some vocational/technical professionals are the most difficult to recruit due to the higher salaries offered by business and industry. This is especially true in Chattanooga where the insurance industry is recruiting math majors for actuarial positions and a strong chemical manufacturing industry is recruiting chemical engineers.

### 7. SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS



Special Education offers its own set of retention issues. Special education teachers typically suffer higher burnout rates. Plus, there are fewer certified candidates entering the pipeline.

#### 8. RETENTION

Turnover is highest among new teachers. Key contributors are stressful working conditions, leadership issues, peer collaboration and support, insufficient time to do the work, and lack of resources.

Teacher/student ratios can also be a stress-generator. The good news is that Hamilton County is currently at or below state requirements in this regard.

Having enough time to prepare for the classroom, work on instruction and collaborate with colleagues is a major concern, especially for elementary school teachers in Hamilton County.

Better teacher preparation and professional development increase teacher retention, and Hamilton County teachers are looking for more satisfying professional development opportunities.

The Task Force believes there is a lack of community support for teachers beyond that of their principals. They are concerned that there is a general lack of support and understanding for them and what they do.

### V. Recommendations

Teacher recruitment and retention has much to do with compensation. Getting Hamilton County in a competitive position will be costly and it will take time, so the committee respectfully recommends the following be part of a 5-year implementation plan with the ultimate goal of creating competitive advantage by 2008.

The Teacher Recruitment and Retention Task Force recommends the following:

#### 1. COMPENSATION

Because so much of the information gathered during this task force process was anecdotal, we recommend that a more careful comparative study be conducted

upon which to base aggressive steps toward the establishment of competitive compensation rates. That being said, the County should:

- a. Evaluate the existing pay scale and retirement plan in light of the market pressures (i.e. north Georgia) and reconsider implementing compensation and cash incentives as outlined in the “Drive for Excellence Strategic Plan 2001-2005,” and adjusting as necessary to allow for the No Child Left Behind act.
- b. Enlist the services of a consultant with expertise in compensation, benefit and pension issues to facilitate these evaluative processes.

## 2. STAFFING

Restructure the Human Resources Department, including the separation of responsibilities of recruitment and employee relations and the establishment of a position or positions totally dedicated to recruitment, including a recruiter focused on math and science teachers.

## 3. TECHNOLOGY

Create or purchase systems technology that will enable state-of-the-art recruitment, follow-up and ongoing data analysis, including:

- a. Completion and submittal of on-line applications;
- b. Sorting of applications by specified selection criterion such as area of certification, position applied for, school applied for, years of experience, licensure, Praxis score, etc. for easy screening by principals;
- c. Tracking applications of priority applicants so they do not “get lost” in the mix of general applications;
- d. Tracking progress of candidates enrolled in the alternative certification program;
- e. Tracking teacher licensure, expiration dates, required training, etc.
- f. Collection of data in terms of why the applicant was not accepted, declined an offer, terminated their employment;
- g. Making all applications available to the principals to view on-line;

- h. Customization of data collection and report generation;
- i. Exit interviews for teachers departing voluntarily;
- j. Climate survey tools to measure faculty attitudes on an ongoing basis;

- Notes:
- 1. Software should assist Personnel staff in managing all aspects of the personnel system and should function for classified staff as well as teachers.
  - 2. IT Department staff from the school system and the county should be involved in the evaluation of the system options and the implementation of changes.

#### 4. RECRUITMENT TRAINING

Create an integrated approach to recruitment, including training principals in the appropriate questions and interview techniques to attract effective teachers. Enlist the support of the Public Education Foundation

- 1) to draft screening questions to augment questions principals currently ask, and
- 2) to implement training programs to ensure principals are skilled in identifying and recruiting effective teachers.

#### 5. FOLLOW-THROUGH

Establish a tracking mechanism so that direct recruits are followed through the application process into an interview. Develop a “Priority Applicant” processing system so that the direct recruits, who are deemed highly qualified by the recruiters, are tracked, contacted and interviewed by the principal in a timely manner

#### 6. MATH & SCIENCE

Create dedicated initiatives for recruiting math and science teachers, including:

- a. Working with the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (and other teacher preparation programs) to identify faculty members from the math,

chemistry, biology, and physics departments who would agree to serve as liaisons to the Department of Education and assist in identification and recruitment of potential teaching candidates.

- i. Once established, using these department relationships to make contact with math and science majors in their sophomore year and encourage teacher certification; maintaining contact with candidates through their senior year and utilizing the alternative certification program or masters program where possible.
- ii. Recruiting teachers from the ranks of soon-to-retire local businesspersons as part of a business/school partnership and utilize alternative certification for these candidates.
- iii. Reduce the chances of turnover by carefully monitoring recruits in the alternative certification track by assigning a human resources professional to track, assist, and monitor their progress.
- iv. Respond to market forces of supply and demand by providing a pay differential for hard to recruit positions such as calculus, trigonometry, physics, chemistry, and certain career/technical positions.

## 7. SPECIAL EDUCATION

Explore the feasibility of a system that would allow special education teachers to rotate into regular classroom positions every two or so years. Issues to be considered include:

- a. Identifying candidates qualified to serve in dual roles as standard classroom and special education teachers and transferring willing standard classroom teachers as necessary to make programs work in individual schools;
- b. Ensuring licensure compliance;

- c. Dual certification for teachers rotating in and out of special education programs, either during under-graduate and post-graduate studies or as part of a special education summer institute;
- d. Partnerships between the teachers rotating out and the teachers rotating in to replace them;
- e. Incentives to attract standard classroom teachers to participate in the program, including possible pay differential.

## 8. TEACHER RETENTION

### A. Reduce stress in the workplace

- i. Maintain and improve upon the current student/teacher ratios.
- ii. Create more time for teachers to work on classroom preparation, and to work with leadership and collaborate with peers.
- iii. Incorporate art, music, physical education, library, and DARE programs into every elementary school schedule so that all teachers from the same grade level have a shared free time period. Utilize parents and community volunteers to teach these classes.

### B. Enhance Professional Development Opportunities

- i. Create more professional development opportunities from outside Hamilton County, including the importation of programs and presenters as well as occasional travel to conferences and workshops.
- ii. Enlist teacher participation –either through surveys or advisory group participation – into the kinds of development programs to be offered.
- iii. Publish and promote professional development activities occurring in various schools during in-service days and allow teachers to attend programs of most interest to them.

### C. Enhance the Mentor Program

- i. Include time for mentors to be in a new teacher's classroom;
- ii. Refine the definition of the consulting teachers to position them more clearly as mentors for new teachers;

- iii. Make one of the mentors available to the new teachers throughout the school day;
- iv. Create opportunities for retired teachers to serve as mentors.

D. Create a More Positive Environment

- i. Provide leadership training for every level in the school system: principals, central office leaders, Board of Education members, and country commissioners – on the factors that affect teacher retention and how to create a supportive environment. Arrange and publicize classroom observation visits by commissioners and school board members.
- ii. Demonstrate concern for teachers' well being by conducting an annual survey to gauge concerns and attitudes about working conditions and other retention-related issues.
- iii. Similarly, conduct exit interviews to gain guidance and perspective from teachers departing voluntarily.
- iv. Create a wellness program, for teachers and staff.
- v. Make growth and development an integral part of the new teacher's work experience leading to tenure.
- vi. Mount an information campaign to educate the community about the intent of the tenure program, i.e. to retain good teachers rather than protect marginal ones. Tenure is a well-defined process to ensure fairness to employees of the education department.
- vii. Similarly, create a communications campaign to portray the teaching profession as honorable, respected and essential so that the community grows in appreciation for the profession and young people are more inclined to choose it for their life's work.

9. ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Create a standing County Mayor's advisory group to serve as the oversight committee for the implementation of these recommendations, including the restructuring of the Human Resources department, and to serve as community liaison group for the advocacy for future initiatives related to teacher recruitment



and retention. This includes working with the system regarding pay issues, and playing an advocacy role for the funding of recommended programs.

**Task Force Members**

Ken Barker	Dan Challener	Carol Downs
Everett Fairchild	Dan Gilbert	Annie Hall
Joyce Hardaway	Rebecca Harper	Larry Henry
Wade Hinton	Bruce Long	Dr. Marvin Lott
Dan Mayfield	Meredith McEwen	Sandra Miller
Phyllis Nicholson	Samevelyn Rock	Marti Smith
Michele Snipes	Doris Stulce	Mary Tanner
Jean Trohanis		

# Facilities, Technology & Textbooks Task Force

Chairman: Chris Crimmons

# **FACILITIES, TEXTBOOKS & TECHNOLOGY TASK FORCE**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Facilities, Textbook, and Technology Task Force was charged with examining the current state of these topics as a result of the Hamilton County Education Summit. The task force was to consider all relevant information to this charge and make recommendations as to how these three areas can be re-shaped to meet Hamilton County's goal of a model public school system by 2008.

The work of the task force was organized into two areas as follows:

### **FACILITIES**

#### **Findings**

- Hamilton County population growth has been flat to modest. There has been a net out migration of households to surrounding counties
- Population movement within Hamilton County is primarily due to shifting of existing population rather than net new growth.
- There is significant holdover of existing facility needs from the 1999 study
- New life safety and fire code rules place new funding demands in addition to existing facility needs.
- In depth examination of each of the 79 schools provides a capital improvement guideline with high, medium, and low priorities
- Current trend of 6 –12 configuration at the high school level is supported to decrease number of separate sites and related cost structure.

#### **Recommendations**

- Fire Code and Life Safety issues need to be corrected as per agreement with State Fire Marshall's office.
- Annual capital improvement fund, first recommended in 1999, needs to be established with funds restricted to facility use only.
- Perform capital improvements according to priorities in Exhibit F.

## **Facilities Subcommittee**

### **FINDINGS**

- Current textbook adoption and distribution system essentially the same for 67 years.
- Current plan goal of five networked computers in each classroom is behind schedule due to lack of funding.
- Technology will play expanding role in teaching and can dramatically improve student achievement. Students today are multi media learners.

#### **Recommendation**

- Implementation of a “one to one” wireless network laptop program for middle and high schools

### **Summary**

The Facilities sub-committee is part of the Facilities, Technology, & Textbook Task Force. The charge of this sub-committee is to review the community input from the Hamilton County Education summit and make recommendations addressing the needs and concerns raised during the summit process.

The committee was created with a diverse cross section of community leadership including two Hamilton County Commissioners, and two Hamilton County School Board members one of which was the current Chairman.

The scope of this committee involved reviewing the physical condition and educational adequacy of the 79 existing schools currently operating in the Hamilton County Schools system. Primary emphasis was given to fire code and life safety condition in each of the 79 structures.

After reviewing fire code and life safety conditions, the physical condition of each building was then evaluated within a context of extending the useful life of each building an additional 25 years.

The committee also developed “tipping point” to determine when it was no longer practical to place major renovation dollars into an existing building. The committee used 50% or more of a building’s replacement cost as a general guideline for replacement versus renovation. Other factors may influence the recommendation, such as; environmental concerns, building type, (wood frame, etc) site constraints, etc.

Resources used during the task force process came from a diverse set of sources including the Superintendent of Schools, Assistant Superintendent of Facilities, Regional Planning Agency, Community Research Council, Chattanooga Housing Authority, and the 1999 Facilities plan.

## **Findings**

### **Facilities Facts and Figures**

- As was indicated in the Community Summit data, the existing buildings are not being maintained at a level expected by parents and citizens
- The committee first evaluated the size and scope of the existing 79 buildings. A detailed report of these findings are attached as Exhibits A and A-1. Key facts from this report are as follows:

6,676,591 square feet under roof

79 existing schools,

88 total sites

Average Age of existing schools 42 years

- Hamilton County has spent over \$120 million on new school construction since the completion of the 1999 Facilities Master Plan. School construction during this period includes the following facilities and a detailed list is attached as Exhibit B.

Allen Elementary (new school)  
Battle Academy (new school)  
Brown Academy (new school)  
CSAS, Partial Renovation  
Hardy Elementary (new school)  
East Ridge, Band & Choral Room  
North Hamilton County, Addition  
Howard High, Renovation and Addition  
Ooltewah High, Gymnasium Addition  
Sale Creek, Addition  
Soddy High, Gymnasium & Band Room Addition

- The work conducted by this committee includes a significant holdover of 1999 capital maintenance priorities that have still not been addressed due to lack of funding. These conditions have deteriorated considerably since the 1999 study and therefore are more problematic than previously identified.
- The fire code and life safety issues are not from a lack of attention by Hamilton County Department of Education. These issues arose from new code adoptions by State of Tennessee and local entities. In most cases, what was acceptable at the time of original construction decades ago is now found to be out of compliance due to a change in regulations.
- Hamilton County Schools are currently moving in a programmatic direction to consolidate middle and high school grades together in 6 – 12 configuration. An example of this trend is the combining of Franklin Middle School with the new Howard campus. Other examples of non-traditional grade configuration include



Lookout Valley and Sale Creek, 6 thru 12; CSAS and Twenty First Century, K thru 12.

- Construction costs have escalated sharply since the completion of the 1999 Master Plan. The local office of the Associated General Contractors estimates construction costs in this period have risen at least 25%.
- Adequacy of a particular school building to meet the current educational program was examined as part of this study. Adequacy to meet program was not a considered factor in the 1999 study.

## **Funding**

- The committee evaluated the current regular maintenance spending across the system (\$4,934,147). Information concerning maintenance and custodial staffing is included and shown as Exhibit B-1

As a benchmark, the committee reviewed private sector figures for maintenance reserves (Planned Improvements/Capital) and these figures ranged from \$1.00 to \$ 2.00 per square foot for heated and cooled area. This maintenance reserve fund is in addition to routine building maintenance as listed above.

It is important to establish a clear distinction between regular maintenance funds and planned improvements. Example: Regular maintenance budget repairs door, roofs, windows, HVAC, etc. Planned improvements provide total replacements of these items.

- The 1999 Master Plan recommended \$7.5 million dollars per year for the planned capital maintenance of the existing school structures. While this was funded at a

\$4 million dollar level for three years, the funds were re-allocated to support other mission critical school functions.

## **Demographics**

- The Regional Planning Agency (RPA) and the Community Research Council provided demographic facts and figures. This information is found in Exhibit C and has the following key findings as it related to the committee's work:  
Flat to modest growth in Hamilton County from 1990-2000 (7.8%).  
North Georgia counties saw population growth in the 15% to 21% range.
- While the early 90's saw positive in migration numbers, the years of 1995 to 2001 all saw negative out migration numbers essentially eliminating the gains from earlier in the decade. The RPA report on community migration is attached as Exhibit D.
- There has been significant residential movement within the county but little net growth. Greatest movement of County population is toward the eastern and northern portions of the County
- The enrollment figures for Hamilton County Schools is on a down slope from a high of 43,358 in the mid 1990's down to 40,301 students. This represents a 7 % decline

The demographic portion of the committee's findings raises a warning flag as it relates to future funding of Hamilton County school facilities. The ability of a public school system to finance and sustain existing facilities as well construct new facilities is a challenge in the face of flat to modest population growth and current out migration household trends.

## **New Methods**

Several private companies are in the business of constructing new school buildings and then leasing them back to the school system. While this has been done in other areas, this option is largely pursued when a school district's bond capacity has met its ceiling and there is no further bond capacity for new construction.

Greenville, South Carolina created an innovative and widely studied model to fund new school construction. The Greenville School District had maximized its bonding capacity but desired to renovate several schools and build new facilities as well. Greenville created a new non-profit organization that had its own bonding capacity that could issue bonds for the renovation and construction of schools. This option was largely created to address lack of bond capacity but it serves as a model worthy of further consideration especially from the finance committee. A summary of this plan is attached as Exhibit E.

## **Work Plan**

The largest body of work by the committee provides a detailed summary of each school's physical and programmatic adequacy and the related dollars to add an additional 25 years to each building. This exhaustive report is attached as Exhibit F and provides a frame work for prioritizing future maintenance, additions, and renovations:

## **Summary of Exhibit F**

The committee reviewed the physical condition and educational adequacy of all schools currently operating in the Hamilton County School System. Primary emphasis was given to fire code and life safety conditions in each structure. The conditions were evaluated within a context of extending the useful life of each building an additional 25 years.

Fire Code Upgrades:	13,422,766
New Construction (Additions, Renovations)	63,390,079
High Priority Repairs:	39,224,217
Medium Priority Repairs:	41,377,023
Low Priority Repairs:	55,523,304
Total system needs:	\$212,937,389

## **Recommendations**

- Completion of fire code upgrades should be a high priority and scheduled for completion with five years, as agreed with the State and Local authorities.
- Establish annual planned capital improvements funding of 1.50 to 2.00 per square foot which equates to \$ 10 million to \$13.4 million per year. These funds are to be placed in a restricted account for use on facilities only

It is important to establish a clear distinction between regular maintenance funds and planned improvements. Example: Regular maintenance budget repairs door, roofs, windows, HVAC, etc. Planned capital improvements provide total replacements of these items.

Creating the annual planned capital improvement maintenance fund clears bond capacity for new school construction or major renovation rather than roofs and boilers that could be planned in advance with the annual maintenance funding.

- Begin priority work on existing schools as guided by exhibit F

Four schools were noted to be beyond the practical point of major renovation due to their age, configuration, environmental concerns, and adequacy of meeting current school program:

Hixson Middle

Orchard Knob Elementary

Red Bank Middle

Soddy Daisy Elementary

The elementary schools are recommended for replacement while the two middle schools could be replaced or combined with the High School campus to create 6-12 configurations.

The 6 –12 configuration should be encouraged with respect to facilities as it reduces overall number of facilities and related maintenance costs for separate facilities.

## **Implementation**

The implementation of the recommendations would be the responsibility of the Hamilton County School Board and the Hamilton County Commission. The Fire Code and Life Safety issues would be the first priority to address.

Once the fire code and life safety issues are addressed, annual planned capital improvement funds of \$10 to 13.4 million should be exclusively utilized to systematically address the needs of existing facilities. The prioritization of this work is broken out in Exhibit F.

## **Textbooks and Technology Subcommittee Summary**

### **Charge**

The Technology and Textbook subcommittee is part of the Facilities, Technology and Textbook task force that resulted from the Education Summit process. This task force has been charged with examining and making recommendations as to how technology and textbooks can be used to meet Hamilton County's goal of having a model public education system by 2008.

Specifically the subcommittee was charged with:

1. Reviewing and evaluating the state of technology in the schools.
2. Reviewing the use of technology by the school administration.
3. Reviewing and evaluating the state of school textbooks, including their currency and condition.
4. Coordinating work, as necessary, with other task forces.
5. Recommending steps and timetables for implementing reasonable changes to the status quo along with cost increases or decreases with those changes.

### ***Resources***

The subcommittee was comprised of individuals from a variety of professional backgrounds including engineering and technology, Hamilton County and HCDE administrative personnel, elected officials and other community leaders (see appendix). The group was expanded to include additional expertise as required and has also invited knowledgeable individuals to provide information to the group as required.

The subcommittee met as a group six times and made site visits to GPS and Lookout Valley Middle/High School to review local technology efforts. An extended visit was made to Henrico County, Virginia by part of the committee to view first hand an

alternative use of technology, generally referred to as the “one to one” laptop model, in which every student has the continual use of a laptop computer.

### **Methodology**

The framework for the sub committee’s work came from public comments gathered during the education summit process. The second highest issue (as measured by points awarded) was related to technology, textbooks and other resources. The comments indicated that it is expected that Hamilton County schools will be provided with adequate and current resources to lead to higher student achievement. All of the comments are included in the appendix.

The group first met for a briefing by HCDE personnel on the status of technology and textbooks in the schools today. HCDE has a technology plan that is updated annually and was discussed with the group. Information was also supplied by HCDE regarding the system for selecting, purchasing and supplying textbooks.

From this starting point the committee moved rapidly to investigate local efforts and other school system’s approaches to the textbook and technology question.

### **Findings**

#### **Current State of Technology in the Hamilton County Schools**

The heart of the current HCDE plan for instructional technology is to place five networked computers in each classroom and to train all teachers to be proficient in their use. The district’s current plan for instructional technology supports the view that:

- For the foreseeable future, effective instruction will be characterized by the use of the textbook as the primary tool for covering the core curriculum
- The development of the Internet has increased access to supplementary materials, but the computer is not currently affordable or proven as a primary instructional tool
- Technology will play a gradually expanding role in effective teaching and learning.



While the district is staying on schedule with textbook renewals, it has fallen behind schedule in the implementation of its technology plan because of budget constraints.

Overall, Hamilton County appears to be slower than most systems as a whole, and within our system each school appears to be adopting technology at different rates. Where the leadership is convinced of the need for change, strategies to get technology into the hands of educators and students have been found. The most aggressive schools have received grants or found funds to move technology ahead. Others have used Title funds as well as Magnet School funds, special bond funding and other methods to achieve success.

Schools not eligible to receive this funding due to a higher level of affluence have relied on PTA's, parents, corporate partners and other donors to acquire technology. Although this effort will often take care of the hardware and software it does not provide for any teacher development in the use of technology. In addition, the system must place certain hardware standards in place to ensure that computers will be compatible with others already in the schools. As a result donors sometimes feel that efforts are not appreciated.

There are also schools in the district that are unable to utilize technology because of the decaying infrastructure of the facility. The school with the lowest ratio of computers to students is Hixson Middle, a decrepit facility which does not offer the capability of installing technology.

HCDE is making an effort to develop content for an Online High School". Working with little or no funding, a small group of educators are working to develop online curriculum. This effort, while greatly needed, reflects the lack of resources and low sense of importance given to technology by policy makers and funders.

## **State of Technology in other states and school systems**

### **Henrico County Schools**

Henrico County (Richmond), Virginia, is a district comparable to Hamilton County in its size and demographics. It has a larger percentage of minority students, but a lower percentage of disadvantaged students. Its expenditures per student are greater than Hamilton County.

Henrico County is the first large urban district in the nation to adopt a “one-to-one” laptop model for the use of instructional technology in middle and high schools. Computers are replacing textbooks as the primary tool for instruction. They are not being used as a supplementary resource.

Such a shift represents a fundamental change in the roles of technology and textbooks in teaching and learning. This is the model that we recommend for Hamilton County, to replace the current technology plan described above.

Henrico County has seen significant improvements in student achievement, attendance, and interest since the introduction of the “one-to-one” laptop model. We believe that the same kind of boost will be seen in Hamilton County. In addition the use of laptops is a powerful recruiting tool to attract and retain a force of highly qualified teachers.

Several key items have come from our study of Henrico County

- Advanced and continued professional development is critical.
- Sufficient infrastructure must be in place from the beginning.
- Content must be relevant.

Besides student achievement the “one-to-one” program is having an impact on other areas of the community.

- Economic development agencies can point to the state of the art education system while recruiting technology based companies.

- Henrico County has experienced an influx of home owners wanting their children to benefit from the school laptop program. Home values have risen at an above average rate for the area.

A more thorough discussion of the Henrico County Model can be found in the appendix.

**State of Maine**

The Maine Learning Technology Initiative- A computer for every lap. The reason behind this initiative can be summed up by the following quote from former Governor Angus King who initiated the program. "For more than a hundred years, Maine has always been in the bottom third of states-in prosperity, income, education and opportunity for our kids...no idea has had as much potential for leapfrogging the other states and putting Maine in a position of national leadership as this one—giving our students portable, Internet-ready computers as a basic tool for learning."

Funded by an unexpected budget surplus in 2001, but not without a legislative fight, this program has continued under Governor King's successor. Numerous stories and articles have appeared pointing to anecdotal evidence of improvements in many students' attention, achievement, effort and discipline.

**Florida Virtual High School**

Begun as an effort to provide additional course material to rural schools, this effort has grown into the nation's largest provider of online course content. The program does not grant degrees, and students must have approval to take a particular course, but it provides a useful alternative to underutilized faculty, or missing course offerings.

**Reviewing and evaluating the use of technology by the school administration**

Because of the greater impact of technology on the educational process the committee has spent little time in this area. It does appear that there are opportunities to improve administrative functions through technology.

If private sector companies can virtually eliminate paper transactions then so can the HCDE. The new enterprise computing system being jointly sought by the county and HCDE will provide new flexibility for finding more technology solutions to administrative issues than the current mainframe system.

## Reviewing and evaluating the state of school textbooks, including their currency and condition

Textbooks currently represent 1% of the HCDE budget. The HCDE purchases textbooks based on an “adoption” system. The textbooks for one subject are purchased each year rotating through six major subject areas over six years.

<b>2000-2001</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
<b>2001-2002</b>	<b>Social Studies</b>
<b>2002-2003</b>	<b>Science/ Health/Agriculture/Home Economics</b>
<b>2003-2004</b>	<b>Language Arts/ Foreign Language</b>
<b>2005-2006</b>	
<b>2006-2007</b>	

The selection of textbooks in Hamilton County is constrained by state policy that limits the use of state funds to the purchase of textbooks that are aligned with the state standards. Local committees make recommendations from the state adoptions to the school board, which generally follows their recommendations.

The six year adoption cycle guarantees that in certain subjects, particularly social studies and some science subjects the material will always be out of date. Current printing technology does little to correct this problem.

Once the new textbooks are adopted by the State of Tennessee the state negotiates the price of the books on their approved list with the Tennessee Textbook Company. Most textbooks in the state are purchased from that source as they have been since 1935. The Tennessee Textbook company represents forty publishers and is paid a commission by the publishers. The local system pays based on the state negotiated book price. Prices are fixed for the entire six year period of the adoption. For non-adopted books the price can rise annually.

Current textbook publishers have been slow to react to the shift from textbooks to computer based content. Many current textbooks are available in CD form but they are simply a “carbon copy” of the existing text. Work to develop educational materials with the specific intent of online and interactive delivery has largely been the work of independent content developers, or the school systems themselves. As online delivery expands over the next three to five years, the amount of materials will grow as well causing current publishers to either push into this area or whither along with their obsolete textbooks.

The use of textbooks will not end with the adoption of a “one-to-one” laptop model, but their use will diminish over time. Henrico County continues to provide a classroom set of textbooks as a supplemental resource.

### Coordinating work, as necessary, with other task forces

1. Anecdotal information indicates that a well planned implementation of technology, including the “one to one” laptop model, leads to an increase in the system’s ability to attract and retain highly qualified teachers.
2. The successful implementation of an effort as broad as the “one to one” model requires support, both financial and otherwise, from the community.
3. The increased use of technology allows a continual development of a refreshed curriculum that remains relevant to the students and teachers. This is of particular concern in the subjects of science and history which each year produces new concepts and content.
4. Although the computer company sales staff and some educators would have you believe that the advanced technologies being produced today are relevant down to the earliest levels of education (Kindergarten), others believe that the concepts required to develop reading competence by the third grade will still rely heavily on one to one instruction. It does appear that technology can be used to augment the role of more traditional methods but is not a substitute at this time.
5. Most technology models appear to drive higher levels of parental involvement in the education process. Direct communications between teachers and parents, through email and other web based methods, simplify the process. Parents can also have direct access to information regarding grades, events and other news about the school system. Even with the new avenues available the general consensus is that it is not a cure-all to the parental involvement issue, only another tool for improvement.

**Recommendation**

The subcommittee has spent a considerable amount of time exploring a number of technology models as discussed in the findings above and it recommends that a “one to one” laptop program be adopted by the Hamilton County Schools.

**Implementation**

The subcommittee has repeatedly heard that the success, or failure, of the “one to one” laptop program can be attributed to the level of preparation for the introduction of the program. This preparation is needed to ensure that teachers, students and parents are all ready for the changes that technology will bring to the education process. In addition, the issues related to network infrastructure must also be addressed prior to the students receiving their laptop.

Based on this information the following four year implementation plan is recommended:

- September 2004.  
Installation of Infrastructure begins.  
Acquire computers for all teachers in grades 6 through 12.
- September 2005  
Acquire computers for introduction to sixth and ninth grade students.
- September 2006  
Acquire computers for second group of sixth and ninth grade students.
- September 2007  
Acquire computers for third group of sixth and ninth grade students and one group of twelfth grade students.



In subsequent years, the computers of each graduating twelfth grade class will go to the entering sixth grade class with new laptops being introduced into the schools at the end of each lease period.

School Year	03-04		04-05				05-06				06-07				07-08			
Quarter	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Planning																		
Secure Funding																		
Internal Infrastructure																		
External Infrastructure																		
Laptops for Teachers																		
Laptops for Students at school (grades 6 )																		
Laptops for Students to take home (grade 6)																		
Laptops for Students to take home (grade 9)																		
Laptops for Students to take home (grade 12)																		
Preliminary Curriculum Provisioning																		
Professional Training																		

### ***Implementation Planning***

The planning process would develop detailed cost and implementation plans and be finished in ninety days. The planning for the implementation would be conducted by a committee of school, county government and community business and technology leaders.

### ***Costs***

Because of the overall cost of the laptop computers, leasing has proven to be an effective way to spread the cost over a longer period of time. It also ensures that there will be an opportunity to upgrade the laptops on a reasonable replacement schedule (four years). The estimated costs of the program when it is in full operation (in the school year 07-08) are outlined in the table below:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Qty.</b>	<b>UM</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>One time</b>	<b>Year one</b>	<b>Year two</b>	<b>Year three</b>	<b>Year Four</b>
Network Electronics at Schools	33	ea		\$2,800,000	\$2,800,000			
Wiring (CAT 5 to classrooms)	1,551	ea	\$110	170,000	170,000			
Fiber to each building								
100Mb Pipe to each school								
145 MB Pipe from NOC to Web								
iBook lease for students (group1)	6,700	ea	\$500			\$3,350,000	\$3,350,000	\$3,350,000
iBook lease for students (group2)	6,700	ea	\$500				3,350,000	3,350,000
iBook lease for students (group3)	8,700	ea	\$500					4,350,000
iBook lease for teachers	1,550	ea	\$500		775,000	775,000	775,000	775,000
Pool to loan iBook	500	ea	\$500			80,000	165,000	250,000
Support Staff								
Technology Coaches	33	ea	\$55,000		1,815,000	1,815,000	1,815,000	1,815,000
Technical Support Staff (school based)	33	ea	\$40,000			1,320,000	1,320,000	1,320,000

System wide Technical Support	4	ea	\$50,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
Staff Development	40	hr	\$20	1,240,000	1,240,000	1,240,000	1,240,000
				<hr/>			
Total				\$2,970,000	\$7,000,000	\$8,780,000	\$12,215,000
				<hr/> <hr/>			

Numbers have been rounded

### ***Infrastructure***

Because of the critical nature of the infrastructure both between and among the schools it is necessary to put this in place quickly. The program's impact on local economic development could support a partnership with EPB Telecom to develop the inter school network. Missing parts of the EPBT network (See map in Appendix) could be jointly funded by this project and EPBT

Internal infrastructure efforts should be implemented immediately through use of private contractors to wire the buildings. Completion should be ninety days after funding is approved.

### ***Training***

As important as the infrastructure is to the success to the program, training of the teachers in the use of their laptops and in access to existing content and integration of the content and curriculum is vital. Teachers will receive their laptops while the infrastructure is being implemented. Paid professional development, specific to integration of the laptop into the classroom, will begin one year prior to the students receiving the computer and will be continuous.

## **Appendix and Exhibits**

### **Henrico County Visit notes**

Why?

Preparing students for today

Providing meaningful instruction

Closing the digital divide

Improving academic performance

Today's students live in a digital world and come to school with different expectations and needs and will face new challenges and will need different methods of problem solving

Year 1 Lessons learned

1. Students need to demonstrate effective use and care
2. Inexpensive ISP service
3. Parents need training
4. Protective bags are essential
5. Wireless world has to work
6. Reliable robust network is a must

Students demonstrate:

1. Keyboarding skills and basic technology skills
2. Improved organizational skills
3. Focused attention
4. Better homework-readily available
5. Expression and instruction through material and iMovies
6. Improved responsibility & discipline
7. Improved interest in learning

## Year 2

1. Teacher training must be formative and continuous
2. Quality content is a must
3. Hardware issues interrupt momentum
4. More student training is needed before deployment. Middle school student spend one semester using laptops before being able to take them home.
5. Students prefer online assessment over paper.

## Year 3

1. Tighter security measures have been implemented with several parental options.
2. Greater use of Richmond Tech council
3. More parent training
4. Curriculum development
  - Continue to develop electronic content
  - Supplement content with aligned website
5. Hardware issues interrupt momentum
  - Local repair depot is a must

## Other thoughts:

Focus groups of teachers have been done

Teachers are paid for training starting at \$18.00 per hour

There are independent evaluations of key issues as opposed to internal evaluation

VCU is partnering with Henrico but has a ways to go

Council of CIO's.

Tech support at each middle and high school

Richmond Tech council has assisted.

Comparison Data	Henrico County	Hamilton County
Population	300,000	311,000

School Enrollment	44,761	40,735
Percent Minority	45.6%	38%
Percent Free & Reduced	28.7%	43%
Number of teachers	2750	2640
Number of schools	62	80
Teacher's starting salary	\$33,138	\$28,239
Tuition Assistance for advanced degrees	Yes	No
Budget	\$295,774,455	\$237,392,965

Facts about the Public School System in Henrico County Schools:

1. Henrico County has 64 schools and 44,000 students with approximately 24,000 students in grades six through twelve.
2. 28000 iBooks leased from Apple with a four-year lease for grades six through twelve. All teachers (K-12) have an iBook
3. Henrico has five networked multimedia computers in each elementary classroom. The newest elementary school has five iBooks in each classroom with four 20-unit iBook portable labs in the school. Elementary Internet Connection is a 10Mb bandwidth supported by Comcast (obsolete) and is frequently down. The hardware is old and will be replaced in the not-too-distant future.
4. The Wide Area Network (WAN) is a leased fiber optic 100 Mb bandwidth back to the Network Operations Center (NOC).
  - a. It is never and has never been down. This infrastructure is leased from Verizon.
  - b. NOC has a 145Mb connection to the Internet.



5. Technology budget for Henrico County is five percent of the total school budget. Henrico's budget is 354 Million. Four to five percent is the range of technology school budget for any school system in the US that is successfully deploying a one-to-one model for technology.
  - a. These budgets support:
    - i. Lease payment, hardware and fiber lines
    - ii. Infrastructure (hardware, software, network)
    - iii. Personnel directly involved in technical support
6. Henrico County already had a hardware technician in each middle and high school when this initiative started. Henrico County added a teacher technology coach for each middle and high school at the start of this project (funded by staff development, not a portion of the technology budget).
7. Each middle and high school has two Macintosh OS-10 servers as well as a Cisco cache engine. Each elementary school has one Apple OS-10 server.
8. Each student is assigned a user ID, password, and a network share. The student keeps all of their work on the network share.
9. There are very few printers in the classrooms. Assignments are submitted, graded, and returned electronically.
10. Infrastructure
  - a. Wireless Local Area Networks
    - i. One 802.11b wireless receiver (air port) in each classroom. Placed in center of the room at ceiling level. (Henrico uses 802.11b due to the fact that 802.11g was not available when they rolled out their network. Hamilton County would deploy an 802.11g or higher)

- b. Fiber Wide Area Networks with a bandwidth of 100Mb dedicated to fiber run from each school back to a Network Operation Center.
- c. All middle and high Schools must be switched with switches that support Virtual Local Area Networks.
- d. Switches must provide power to devices that are plugged in them (i.e. airport).
- e. Server Platform: Apple running OS-10
  - i. Network-based curriculum software wherever possible.
- f. Technical Support
  - i. School based technician supervises the student help desk for the school they are assigned to and focuses only on repairing laptops.
  - ii. Two Cisco certified network engineers (system-wide support)
  - iii. Server and network are supported by Information Systems staff.
  - iv. Technical hardware support ratio in Henrico County is approximately one technician to 800 devices.

11. Staff development (focus on appropriate teaching methodologies that support a one-to-one technology model)

- a. Project based
- b. Teaching by walking around
- c. Student spending more time on task
- d. Technology can utilize all eight modalities of learning.
- e. E-mail for students is GaggleNet (filtered) Assigned for specific projects.

12. Working toward School Interoperability Framework Standard (SIF) compliance.

- a. Henrico was using a content filter called N2H2 to provide a filtered network environment for the classroom. This content filter could not handle the volume of a one-to-one. (The content filter currently available to HCDE that is provided by Education Networks of America will not support this model. It will have to be replaced by 8e6 technology running on four R3000 boxes.)

### 13. Security

- a. Virtual LAN
- b. No wireless on administrative VLAN
- c. No unauthorized airports anywhere
- d. Wireless LAN has student servers-based curriculum software and internet access.
- e. No “image searches” are allowed on Internet search engines
- f. No using “chat rooms”
- g. No instant messaging.
- h. Image on laptop is locked down
- i. Cisco Firewall located at the NOC (two 527s for failover)
- j. Spaminator to eliminate spam
- k. No general e-mail accounts for students
- l. Apples Remote Desktop to monitor what students are doing on their laptop.

14. Hardware Cache in each school (Cisco CE507). This device also does network address translation (NAT). NAT assists in reducing overall network traffic over the wide area network.

### 15. Tools that are used by teacher and students.

- a. APEX, Beyond Books
- b. Nettekcker.com

### 16. Internet training

- a. Safety brochures
- b. Letters to parents
- c. Giving parents four choices for at home access
  - i. Leave computer at school
  - ii. Proxy locked down in laptop image

- iii. Go to public libraries (also filtered)
- iv. Internal software content barrier
- v. All images for iBooks prevent history from being deleted
- d. Cable TV station for Public Relations and parental involvement support

17. Wireless Access Points

- a. In every classroom (ceiling in the center of the room)
- b. Connected to the network via twisted pair wiring (category five or higher).
- c. Cisco's access point can be set to use one milliwatt. This setting reduces signal bleedover.
- d. Multi-level Buildings with wooden floors signal bleedover can occur between floors.
- e. Switches in every communications closet.
- f. Communications closets connections are over fiber at gigabit speeds.

18. Response time for entire class to be on the same Internet address is 4 seconds.

19. Durability of laptop is critical

20. There is an ISP for the county that provides filtered connection for the home at \$7.95 per month. Parents pay \$ 50 per year insurance on the laptop assigned to their child

- a. \$ 100 deductible replaces lost or damaged laptop.
- b. The Public Education foundation assists with the ISP payment, the insurance payment, and the deductible for those families that need assistance.

21. Benefits of this one-to-one technology model at Henrico County (this is the middle of their third year)

- a. Dropout rate is down to 1.57%
- b. Attendance rate is much higher than ever (We have asked for exact percentages)

- c. SAT scores are up
- d. More students taking SAT than ever
- e. Students earned \$ 17.1 million in scholarships spring of 2003
- f. Level playing field
  - i. Equity: Equal access to education regardless of socioeconomic status.
- g. Assists in eliminating the digital divide for students
- h. Positive impact on families that heretofore have not had any technology in their home.
  - i. Parents who haven't been exposed to computers in the home get an opportunity to learn technology as a tool from their children and the school system.
- i. Improved Real Estate Property Values –
  - i. Quality of Education System is the #1 Criterion in home selection.
  - ii. It also results in higher property values because there is a greater demand for homes in the county which will result in greater tax revenues to the county.
- j. Increased interest on the part of business to locate in Henrico county
- k. Growth – 1500 students per annum was approximately 600 per annum prior to this model being deployed.

22. For a one-to-one technology model to work from Henrico County Leadership perspective.

- a. Superintendent together with all the curriculum leaders must lead the charge.
- b. Everyone involved in curriculum must be supportive.
- c. All infrastructure items must be in place
- d. On-site technology support at each building (Henrico County is still at one technician to 838 devices.

- e. Laptops that need repair must be back in the hands of students within 48 hours.
  - i. Loaners available for longer terms of students without iBook.
  - ii. Pool of loaners available.
- f. Security for wireless
- g. Use of Virtual LAN for student and a separate VLAN for Administration.

#### 23. Network Issues

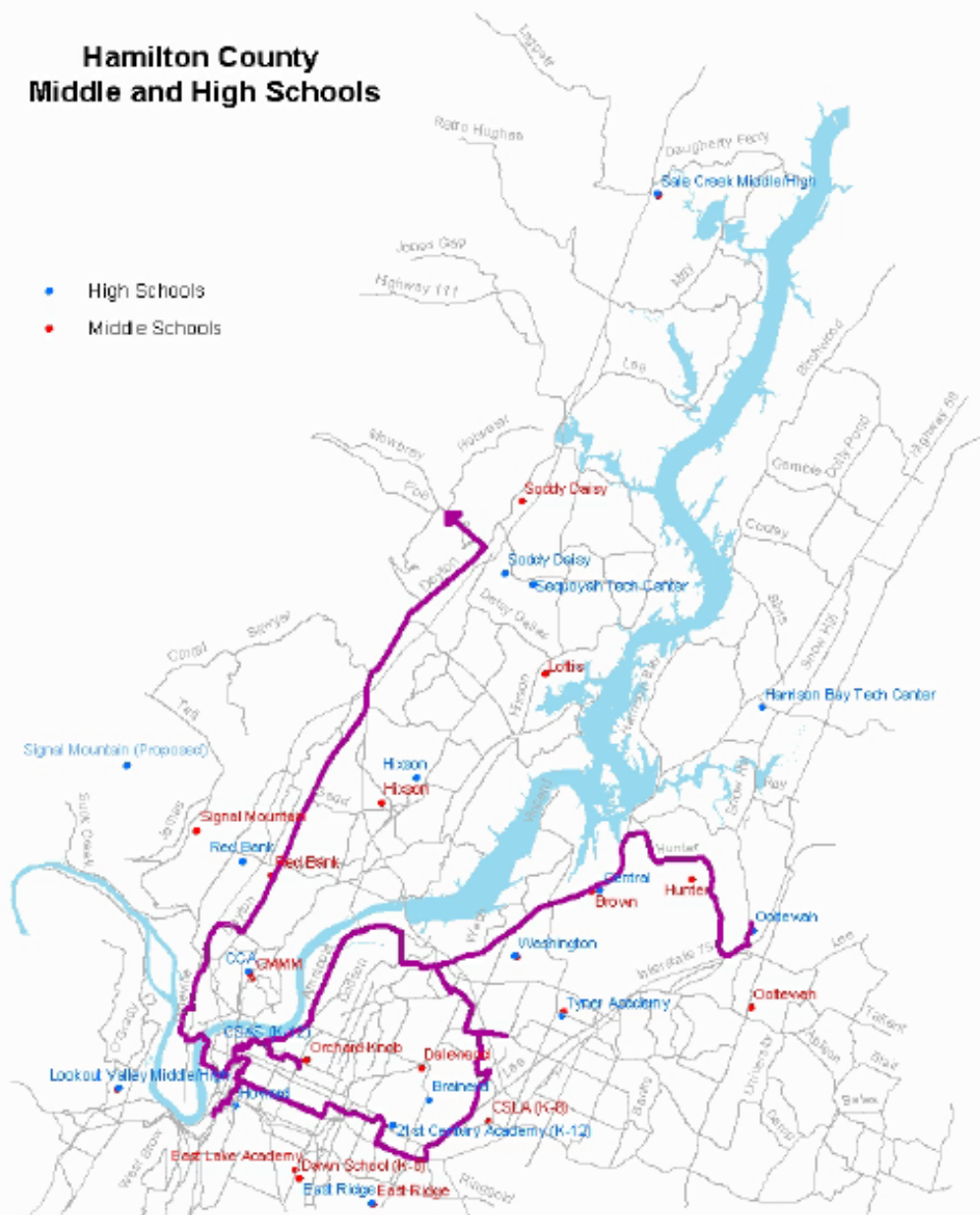
- a. Six fiber strands running to each school
- b. 100 mg bandwidth to each school
- c. Backbone in school must be running a 1Gb Bandwidth.

#### 24. Why iBook

- a. Durability (Consumers Report)
- b. Server security (Gartner Group)
- c. Support of one-to-one model
- d. Established install base is in several school systems
- e. Viruses are virtually a non-issue

## Hamilton County Middle and High Schools

- High Schools
- Middle Schools



## Technology/Books/Resources

Task Force Assignment: 3

Comment	Total Score
Adequate facilities and materials for all students, technology	38
Up to date technology that is abundant , accessible and available to every student, employee & parent including laptops	27
More technology in classroom and money to support technology	26
Adequate facility school plant with state of the art tech, science and math labs	26
Every school should have updated technology, including band and art	24
Teachers have adequate resources in classroom to implement curriculum (laptops, aides)	24
Teachers and students have all materials necessary for teaching and learning, technology is current, abundant, and working	23
All students are taught with progressive and up to date curriculum with enough manpower and supplies to teach a full range of learners	23
Classrooms that are well equipped with age appropriate, user friendly books, equipment and technology that is kept up to date, well maintained and taught and used daily.	22
Latest technology in schools and up and working with qualified personnel to operate it	20
Up to date materials and equipment	19
Upgrading library media centers, including resources and facilities particularly high school	19
Up to date materials and resources	19
All schools have kept up with the technologies of the time	18
All students and teachers will have access to the latest technology in the classroom	17
All classrooms have up to date materials	17
Schools are well funded & all teaching material will be provided i.e. textbooks, art supplies, tape	16
At least one workable computer for every twelve students in each classroom with internet access	16
Well paid teachers and well supplied class rooms	15



Money is available to purchase most up to date technology, including laptops and text books for students	15
Adequate supplies and facilities without fees	15
Technology in every classroom and technology training for all teachers	14
All teachers have text books, computers, and supplies as needed to teach	14
Fully funded textbooks meeting state standards	14
Science and math labs in all schools including elementary	14

**Group Members**

Chris Crimmins, Task Force Chair

John Germ, Sub Committee Chair

Curtis Adams

Tim Andrews

Chip Baker

Ken Blankenship

Fred Carr

Steve Leach

Worth Lillard

Charles Love

William Madison

Lee McDade

Jack Murrah

Rachael Rushworth, Student Representative

Kurt Stagmaier

Wayne Starr

Roger Tudor

Charlotte Vandergriff

Gary Waters

Ann Weeks

Tanya Wildgoose

Others attending or presenting to subcommittee

John Reed, President, Tennessee Textbook Company

Dr. James Kelly, Apple Computer

Barbara Nelson, Apple Computer

Dr. Mark Edwards, Superintendent, Henrico County Schools

# Community Involvement Task Force

Chairman: Ruth Brinkley

# **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TASK FORCE**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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  - **Hamilton County Board of Education Summary and Overview, *Debbie Colburn***
  - **“Best Practices” for Marketing Communication, *Patrice Batchelor, Robin Derryberry***
  - **Hamilton County Schools Marketing Communication Plan (2004-2005), *Dr. Jesse Register***
  - **Corporate and Business Community Visioning Session, *Robin Derryberry***

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Community Involvement Task Force of the Hamilton County Education Summit was charged to develop innovative and effective ways to involve the general community (institutions and community members other than parents, teachers and administrators) in the public education system. Specific tasks included but were not limited to:

1. Review relevant input and recommendations from the public surveys and community forums.
2. Identify national trends regarding community involvement in the public school system and studying relevant model systems.
3. Identify effective ways to involve businesses and service organizations in the daily life of the public education system along with a plan to recruit participation.
4. Review the ways in which the school system communicates its programs and their results to the community-at-large.
5. Coordinate work, as necessary, with other task forces.
6. Recommend steps and timetables for implementing reasonable changes to the status quo along with cost increases or decreases associated with those changes.

In order to complete its charge, the task force developed a five (5) step work plan that was completed during seven (7) meetings from January 22, 2004 to March 26, 2004.

1. Inventory current involvement of community, business, and service organizations in the Hamilton County School System; inventory current communication practices.
2. Identify national “best practices” for business and community involvement.
3. Identify national “best practices” for involvement of service organizations.
4. Identify best practices for communication of school system successes, needs and opportunities for improvement.
5. Develop a corporate/business community vision for support of education.

Findings and recommendations contained in this report were based on information drawn from two (2) major sources: public surveys and community forums conducted by

Hamilton County Mayor's office; and input and perspectives resulting from a visioning session of community leaders.

Input from public surveys and community forums, identified six (6) major needs:

- a) Improved parenting skills.
- b) Increased parental involvement.
- c) Increased funding for the public school system.
- d) Increased involvement of business leaders in the public school system in order to make Hamilton County more attractive to new businesses and increasing employment and tax revenues.
- e) Improved overall community support for teachers.
- f) Improved public education communications campaign.

A visioning session involving members of the Community Involvement Task Force, along with additional community leaders, held on March 5, 2004 resulted in three action items:

- a. Find the ***“Classroom to Work”*** connection and engage the schools and business in meaningful dialogue to make that connection more effective
- b. Successfully “merge” business and education so that all are working toward the same objectives
- c. Ongoing and consistent messages that market and communicate to the community the benefits, successes and needs for community support of the public education system

Input from the above sources was combined with research, discussion and deliberations of the Hamilton County Education Summit's Community Involvement Task Force. Collectively, this information was aggregated and analyzed, resulting in four (4) major findings:

## **Findings**

1. In order for Chattanooga and Hamilton County to be viewed as a successful, vibrant community which provides a friendly and supportive environment to current and new businesses, effective, well-defined, mutually beneficial partnerships must exist between the public education system and the business and corporate community, and community service organizations. This will help insure that graduates of the public school system are appropriately equipped to become successful members of the workforce or seamlessly progress to post-secondary education without excessive remediation or undue investments. While the public education system has “pockets of excellence” (such as the East Ridge Construction Academy), and some “leading practices” that currently achieve these objectives, these areas of excellence and leading practices do not extend across all schools and all levels within the public education system.
2. The business and corporate community, along with community service organizations have varying practices for encouraging the active involvement of parents and other adults in the lives and education of children in the public schools. This variation is due to a variety of factors, such as scheduling inflexibility, (by both schools and employers), time allowed away from the workplace, etc. Neither criteria nor “best practice” models exist for helping employers to become “education friendly” workplaces.
3. There is minimal private funding and inconsistency in funding amounts provided to Hamilton County public schools. Privately donated, foundation-managed funds do exist and more investment should be generated and made available to the public school system.
4. Overall, Hamilton County public schools are making significant progress in many areas of performance, such as reading, mathematics, etc. Several areas of excellence and leading practices are viewed as models for the country; yet, Hamilton County

residents are largely unaware of these positive outcomes. An ongoing, well-defined and consistent marketing and communications plan, led by a communications professional would have a significantly positive impact on educating Hamilton County residents about the benefits and positive outcomes of the public education system.

### **Recommendations**

Based on information from the surveys, community visioning sessions, and task force deliberations, the Community Involvement Task Force recommends the following:

1. Develop and implement a vision for involvement and partnership between the business and corporate community, and community service organizations.
2. Provide criteria and implement “best practice” models for employers to implement “education friendly” workplaces, focusing on strong support for parental and adult volunteer involvement in the lives of students in the public education system. This involvement is especially crucial for early childhood students and schools.
3. Develop a plan to increase (endowed, foundation-supported) funding for public schools using the expertise of local funding and foundation resources, such as the Community Foundation and the Public Education Foundation.
4. Launch consistent short- and long-term communication efforts which successfully describe the benefits, successful performance outcomes, needs and opportunities for involvement in Hamilton County public schools.

Implementation of these recommendations will require additional time, effort, funds and clear accountability. However, this effort will be successful only if this community takes an active role in supporting public education. The success of any community is inextricably tied to the availability of an educated and well-equipped workforce. Existing and relocating businesses will accept no less. If we are to successfully sustain existing businesses and recruit new businesses, we must “hold our own” in making sure that we



have a strong public education system that educates tomorrow's workforce and that is able to offer relocating employers and employees the benefits of great public schools.

The Community Involvement Task Force undertook an inclusive process which involved several members of the Hamilton County community who care very deeply about the public school system and who generously donated their time to this effort. Through the meetings and visioning session, a total of 50 community leaders were involved with the work of this task force. These individuals have long histories of involvement with the Hamilton County Schools and are known to have made significant investments of time, talent and financial resources to assist this community and the public schools.

### ***Community Involvement Participants***

• Task Force Members	20
• Additional Information/Presentations	3
• Memorial Health Care System Support	3
• Visioning Session	<u>24</u>
<b>Total Participants</b>	<b>50</b>

## **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TASK FORCE MEMBERS**

<b><i>Ruth Brinkley, Chair, Memorial Health Care System</i></b>	<b>Rev. Bernie Miller, New Covenant Fellowship</b>
<b>Debbie Colburn, Hamilton County Board of Education</b>	<b>Catherine Murray, (Retired) Hamilton County Department of Education</b>
<b>Pete Cooper, President, Community Foundation</b>	<b>Dan Saieed, Hamilton County Government</b>
<b>Robin Derryberry, The Ingram Group</b>	<b>Scott Schoolfield, Hamilton County Government</b>
<b>Bill Eldridge, Hamilton County Board of Education</b>	<b>Sue Shaw, Shaw Realtors</b>
<b>Ione Farrar, Chattanooga Research Council</b>	<b>Robert Siskin, Robert H. Siskin and Associates</b>
<b>Bill Hullander, Hamilton County Commission</b>	<b>Merri Mai Williamson, Application Researchers</b>
<b>Ruth Holmberg, Public Education Foundation</b>	<b>Tom Edd Wilson, Chattanooga Chamber of Commerce</b>
<b>Warren Logan, Urban League of Chattanooga</b>	<b>Willeata Kendrick, Hamilton County Schools</b>
<b>Valerie Gifford, Tennessee Valley Federal Credit Union</b>	<b>Dr. Benjamin R. Wygal, Southern Adventist University</b>

### ***County Mayor's Office Support***

**Jeannine Alday**

### ***Research and Presentations to Provide Additional Information and Input***

**Patrice Batchelor, Memorial Health Care System**

**Dr. Dan Challener, Public Education Foundation**

**Howard Roddy, Memorial Health Care System**

**Liz Jenkins, Memorial Health Care System**

**Jack Murrah, Lyndhurst Foundation**

**Dr. Jesse Register, Hamilton County Schools**

### ***Memorial Health Care System Support Staff***

**Suzanne Burch**

## **Community Leaders Visioning Group\***

<b>Phil Acord, Chair, Parental Involvement Task Force, Hamilton County Department of Education</b>	<b>Tom Kinser, BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee</b>
<b>Charlie Arant, Tennessee Aquarium</b>	<b>Shawn Kurrelmeier-Lee, Public Education Foundation</b>
<b>David Breckinridge, Alstrom</b>	<b>Sandy McMillan, Chattanooga Manufacturers' Association</b>
<b>Larry Buie, Chattanooga Gas Company</b>	<b>Jack Murrah, Lyndhurst Foundation</b>
<b>Chandra Chandrasekaran, TVA and Chattanooga School for Arts and Sciences</b>	<b>Mattie Moran, Chattanooga Chamber of Commerce</b>
<b>Ray Childers, Chattanooga Manufacturers' Association</b>	<b>Jeff Olingy, Chattanooga Chamber of Commerce</b>
<b>Bob Doak, Chattanooga Convention and Visitors Bureau</b>	<b>Rick Smith, Hamilton County Schools</b>
<b>Jim Frierson, Kruesi Center for Innovation</b>	<b>Michele Snipes, Hamilton County Schools</b>
<b>Sherrie Gilchrist, Chattanooga African American Chamber of Commerce</b>	<b>Ray Swofford, Hamilton County Department of Education</b>
<b>Tom Griscom, Chattanooga Times Free Press</b>	<b>Dr. Mary Tanner, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga</b>
<b>Mai Bell Hurley, United Way</b>	<b>Laura Tew, Coalition for Math and Science</b>
<b>Jolena King, McKee Foods Corporation</b>	<b>Chris Young, SMP Industries</b>

*\* Members of the Community Involvement Task Force also participated in the visioning session.*

*Information and assistance with the work of the task force was also provided by the Financial Statistical Review Task Force.*

<p><b>In order for Chattanooga and Hamilton County to be viewed as a successful, vibrant community which provides a friendly and supportive environment to current and new businesses, effective, well-defined, mutually beneficial partnerships must exist between the public education system and the business and corporate community, and community service organizations. This will help insure that graduates of the public school system are appropriately equipped to become successful members of the workforce or seamlessly progress to post-secondary education without excessive remediation or undue investments. While the public education system</b></p>	<p><b><i>Develop and implement a vision for corporate involvement and support of the public education system. Annually evaluate effectiveness of achieving identified objectives.</i></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engage corporate, business and community service leaders in meaningful dialogue with Hamilton County Department of Education leaders to achieve the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Clear definition of the <b><i>“Classroom- to- Work Connection”</i></b>.</li> <li>➤ Successfully merge business and education objectives.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Engage the Chamber of Commerce to be the main link between schools and employers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Coordinate the provision of support for the various academies.</li> <li>➤ Establish and coordinate a marketing</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p><b>Chamber of Commerce; HCDE Leaders and Teachers</b></p>	<p><b>9/04</b></p>	<p><b>Chamber of Commerce; HCDE Leaders and Teachers</b></p>
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<p>has “pockets of excellence” (such as the East Ridge Construction Academy), and some “leading practices” that currently achieve these objectives, these areas of excellence and leading practices do not extend across all schools and all levels within the public education system.</p>	<p>coalition to support school marketing efforts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Build and communicate the business case for quality public education in the community’s economic development efforts</li> </ul> <p>3. Develop short-term and long-term strategies to address the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Clear expectations for defined educational outcomes</li> <li>➤ Measurable, mutually agreed upon goals with data to inform plan development, implementation and measurement. These goals must be understood by the Hamilton County Department of Education (HCDE) and the Corporate and Business Community</li> </ul> <p>a) <i>Strengthen business/school partnerships with particular emphasis and involvement in the</i></p>	<p><b>HCDE Leaders</b></p>	<p><b>12/04</b></p>	<p><b>HCDE Leaders</b></p>
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	<p><i>Magnet Career Academy concept where curricula are rigorous and relevant.</i></p> <p><i>b) Revisit “Adopt a Schools” program for non-career academies and determine guidelines and definitions for adopting a school, developing meaningful relationships, and an analysis of what works, what does not work, lessons learned, and opportunities for improvements. Pay particular attention to early childhood education programs and schools.</i></p> <p><i>c) Develop a formal, written agreement between HCDE and the Business and Corporate Community and community service organizations to achieve specified goals and outcomes</i></p>			
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	<p>4. Better utilize volunteers to assist in the public schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Publicize volunteer hours and opportunities on the HCDE website.</li> <li>1. Identify a Volunteer Coordinator.</li> <li>2. Form partnerships with retired professionals through their professional associations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Teachers</li> <li>b. Principals</li> <li>c. Librarians</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Partner with local churches to communicate more effectively with parishioners/congregants.</li> </ul> <p><i>Define the unique role that community service organizations can fulfill in effectively supporting the public schools</i></p>			
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Encourage healthcare organizations to donate healthcare services (especially for financially disadvantaged students).</li> <li>2. Provide early screening to detect conditions that can adversely affect the student's ability to learn. A thorough testing of students could be undertaken with the assistance of local health care providers.</li> <li>3. Utilize special education providers to identify and assist with plans to meet special education needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Siskin Children's Institute</li> <li>➤ UTC</li> <li>➤ Signal Center</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Enlist community service organizations (non-profits) to help the schools provide community service opportunities for students; for example, Habitat for Humanity could provide building experience for students in the East Ridge</li> </ol>			
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<p><b>The business and corporate community, along with community service organizations have varying practices for encouraging active involvement of parents and other adults in the lives and education of children in the public schools. This variation is due to a variety of factors, such as scheduling</b></p>	<p>Construction Academy.</p> <p>5. Enlist Realtor and Apartment Mangers' professional associations to facilitate the recruitment and movement of new teachers into the area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Deposit waivers</li> <li>➤ Mailing leases to out of town prospects</li> <li>➤ Assistance in getting utilities started</li> </ul> <p>6. Utilize UTC and CSTCC to facilitate teacher preparation, continuing education and curricular assistance.</p> <p>7. Sell the need for Arts education in the schools to the public.</p> <p>CLEARLY DEFINE WHAT THE BUSINESS AND CORPORATE COMMUNITY MUST DO TO GAIN THE ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT, PROMOTION AND SUPPORT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION BY THEIR EMPLOYEES. ANNUALLY EVALUATE EFFECTIVENESS OF OBJECTIVES.</p>	<p><b>Chamber of Commerce; HCDE Leaders and Teachers</b></p>	<p><b>9/04</b></p>	<p><b>Chamber of Commerce; HCDE Leaders and Teachers</b></p>
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<p><b>inflexibility, (by both schools and employers), time allowed away from the workplace, etc. Neither criteria nor “best practice” models exist for helping employers to become “education friendly” workplaces.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop written employer standards and policies on involvement in the schools.</li> <li>2. Provide annual awards and recognition for “education friendly” employers.</li> <li>3. Allow paid time off to allow parents to attend teacher conferences, M- Team meetings, PTA meetings, awards days, Parent Council and similar activities. Flexible scheduling (early mornings and early evenings) should be encouraged by the schools so that employees can be available for conferences and meetings at more convenient times outside of regular business hours.</li> </ol> <p>➤ If the employer is unable to afford the expense or if the absence poses an extreme hardship on the company, then the arrangement of schedules (on both sides) to accommodate the absence is encouraged. Employees would take</p>			
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	<p>vacation or sick days to fulfill this duty only as a last resort</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Parents and non-parents should be encouraged to provide mentoring opportunities for students.</li> </ul> <p>4. Identify employees who will provide the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Leadership for school projects at all levels</li> <li>➤ Expertise to the schools or school system in particular areas, such as marketing, information technology or other curricular areas</li> <li>➤ Expertise to develop and provide ongoing support for academies within schools such as the Construction Academy at East Ridge or the Health Sciences Academy at Red Bank</li> <li>➤ Destinations for meaningful field trips</li> <li>➤ “Job Shadowing” opportunities</li> </ul>			
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Summer internships for both students and teachers</li> <li>➤ Employees to participate on Chamber of Commerce committees related to education</li> <li>➤ Assistance with school projects</li> <li>➤ Teaching assistance</li> <li>➤ Funding for character education classes</li> </ul> <p>5. Expand <b><i>“Teacher Supply Depot”</i></b> to provide classroom supplies, computer equipment, furniture and other needed capital goods (in good working condition)</p> <p>6. Highlight educational issues in company newsletters, e-mails, etc.</p> <p>7. Conduct “book drives” for school libraries</p>			
<p><b>There is minimal private funding and inconsistency in funding amounts provided to Hamilton County public schools. Privately donated, foundation-managed</b></p>	<p><b><i>Develop a plan to increase (endowed, foundation-managed) funding for the public school system using local individual as well as corporate resources. These resources include both financial funding and/or “in kind”</i></b></p>	<p><b>HCDE Leaders</b></p>	<p><b>3/05</b></p>	<p><b>HCDE Leaders</b></p>

<p><b>funds could and should be generated and made available to the public schools.</b></p>	<p><i>resources.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Set and achieve aggressive fundraising targets for annual financial support for a particular school or project, and/or for systemic improvements. Fund management could be effectively accomplished by either the Community Foundation or the Public Education Foundation.</li> <li>2. Develop an endowed fund so that each school could receive gifts from its alumni and others. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Encourage Alumni groups to set up college scholarships to benefit graduates of their high school.</li> <li>➤ Endow selected programs, such as math, science, community service , and libraries.</li> <li>➤ Develop and endow study abroad</li> </ul> </li> </ol>			
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	<p>programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Encourage gifts to be made in memory of a favorite teacher or by a particular class (much like colleges get major gifts from a 50<sup>th</sup> reunion).</li> </ul> <p>3. Enlist various trade organizations to fund respective areas of expertise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Automotive dealers for funding vocational education in the automotive services area.</li> <li>➤ Engineers and engineering companies to fund pre-engineering curriculum.</li> </ul> <p>4. Encourage Chattanoogaans to leave a portion of their estates to endow some facet of the educational process.</p>			
<b>Overall, Hamilton County public schools are making significant</b>	<b><i>Launch short- and long-term, consistent and ongoing communication efforts to</i></b>	<b>HCDE; County</b>	<b>9/04</b>	<b>HCDE; County</b>

<p>progress in many areas of performance, such as reading, mathematics, etc. Several areas of excellence and leading practices are viewed as models for the country; yet, Hamilton County residents are largely unaware of these positive outcomes. An ongoing, well-defined and consistent marketing and communications plan, led by a communications professional would have a significantly positive impact on educating Hamilton County residents about the benefits and positive outcomes of the public education system.</p>	<p><i>successfully convey key messages, and describe the benefits, successes, needs and opportunities derived from a vibrant and successful public school system. A communications professional should be hired to lead this effort.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engage Hamilton County Department of Education and County Commission in meaningful dialogue about the need for this function in the public schools.</li> <li>2. Hire firm for short term / find permanent person for long term.</li> <li>3. Work with the news media to develop a consistent and sustainable marketing campaign to inform and educate corporations and the community at large regarding successes, accomplishments and challenges of the public education system. Develop a coalition of communication</li> </ol>	<p><b>Mayor's Office</b></p>		<p><b>Mayor's Office</b></p>
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	<p>professionals in the Hamilton County area to assist in developing a meaningful and robust plan.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Develop a “tagline” for the effort; reposition and market the public schools as a recruiting advantage for corporate/economic growth and development.</li> <li>5. Provide mechanism for oversight of process.</li> <li>6. Communicate immediate successes.</li> <li>7. Develop “white papers” on each school; distribute to the community and post on the Hamilton County Department of Education website.</li> <li>8. Utilize “<b><i>Champions</i></b>” to promote the public schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Successful HCDE graduates</li> <li>➤ Current students</li> <li>➤ College students of the Hamilton</li> </ul> </li> </ol>			
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	<p>County public schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Outside consultants with knowledge of Hamilton County Schools</li> <li>➤ Post secondary institutions</li> <li>➤ Teachers, administrators, principals</li> <li>➤ Businesses with successful Hamilton County public schools graduates</li> <li>➤ School Board members</li> <li>➤ Superintendent's "Cabinet"</li> <li>➤ "Teachers of the Year"</li> <li>➤ Engaged and informed state legislators</li> </ul>			
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# Parental Involvement Task Force

Chairman: Phil Acord

# **PARENT INVOLVEMENT TASK FORCE**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

*“What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all of its children.” -- JOHN DEWEY*

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Parent Involvement Task Force was given two distinct objectives:

1. to develop a program instructing parents of preschool children about early childhood development and encouraging their active participation in that development; and
2. to develop a program to encourage parents and/or caregivers with children in the school system to be actively involved in their child’s education through graduation.

These objectives were established in direct response to the community forums where participants identified and ranked parental involvement as the third highest area of concern. Teachers surveys ratings identified parent involvement as teachers most important concern.

The task force began its work by hearing presentations from an array of promising programs and efforts that exist in Hamilton County, many of which are either based on or are affiliated with, successful initiatives underway in other states. In addition, the task force as a whole reviewed current relevant research on the dynamics of changing families in today’s society, the startling scientific evidence on early brain development and its implications regarding parent involvement and the economic importance of early childhood education. The task force reviewed the efforts of numbers of communities that are successfully achieving parent involvement.

## II. DEFINING TERMS

The definitions from Steven M. Constantino's 2003 book, Engaging All Families: Creating a Positive School Culture by Putting Research into Practice, were used by the task force.

- Parent

The word "parent" in this report refers to those individuals who are involved in their children's education. We recognize that today other adults may also carry the primary responsibility for a child's education and development. Therefore, all references to parent involvement should be construed as including any adults who play an important role in a child's upbringing and well-being.

- Parent Involvement

"Parent involvement" is the participation of parents in every facet of children's education and development from birth to adulthood, recognizing that parents are the primary influence in children's lives.

Parent involvement takes many forms, including

- Two-way communicating between parents and schools
- Supporting parents as children's primary educators and integral to their learning
- Encouraging parents to participate in volunteer work
- Sharing responsibility for decision making about children's education, health, and well-being
- Collaborating with community organizations that reflect schools' aspirations for all children

- Schools

References to "schools" may be broadly interpreted to include other programs that serve children and families, such as academic, specialty, or community programs.

- PTAs

References to PTAs should be broadly interpreted to apply to other types of parent groups or parent involvement professionals.

### **III. SCOPE OF WORK**

#### 1. Teachers surveys and Comments of Participants

The Hamilton County Education Summit Survey Results Chart, Teachers' Rating Priorities, Very Important vs. Very Successful, shows that over 90% of teachers responding in Hamilton County rank parent involvement at home as the second most important priority of the thirteen priorities that were identified by over 90% of teachers rating this factor as very important. Teachers further rate the success of parent involvement as less than 10%. People in the community attending the community forums ranked parental involvement as the third highest category of concern, with over 85% considering parent involvement at home to be very important.

#### 2. Programs

The task force researched and reviewed an array of promising programs and efforts at the local, state and national level:

- **Community Impact of Chattanooga, Inc.** – Parent Organization or Affiliation -A collaborative partnership of City of Chattanooga, United Way, Public Education Foundation, Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga, Benwood Foundation, Lyndhurst Foundation, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation; Auspices - nonprofit; Description - a family involvement model that is directly related to student achievement; Mission/Goal – increase program effectiveness, train parents on effective parent involvement based on Epstein and Prichard Models, and create an effective school-age literacy program; Entry Point/Intake – starting models

in schools; Staffing Requirements – staffed by Public Education Foundation with a Family Partnership Specialist; Research/Outcome Based - research based; Target Population Age – NA.

- **First Things First** – Parent Organization or Affiliation - Chattanooga organization is the national office; Auspices – nonprofit; description – reduce divorce and out of wedlock pregnancies and increase father involvement in the lives of their children; Mission/Goal – dedicated to strengthening marriages and families; Entry Point/Intake – call office to register; Staffing Requirements – teaching staff have minimum of a college degree; most have advanced degree; Research/Outcome Based – NA; Target Population Age – all ages.
- **Regional Intervention Program** – Parent Organization or Affiliation - Partnership for Families, Children and Adults (RIP home office Nashville); Auspices – Nonprofit; Description – internationally recognized parent implemented program (TN 17; Cleveland, OH -1; Washington state -2) in which parents learn behavior management techniques with their own children; Mission/Goal – serve families with young children with behavior problems by helping acquire information/skills to cope with and change the child’s behavior; Entry Point/Intake – referrals from traditional children contact sources (i.e., daycare, pediatricians, parents, etc.); Staffing Requirements – a Coordinator with a Bachelor’s Degree in a social and behavior science area and a Classroom Aide (usually a Social Work college senior); Research/Outcome Based - both; Target Population Age – young children through kindergarten years and their families.
- **Invest in Children** – Parent Organization or Affiliation - United Way of Greater Chattanooga; National affiliate of Success by 6 through United Way of America; Auspices – Nonprofit; Description – an early childhood initiative to direct community resources and build private/public sector

relationships; Mission/Goal – help children reach their full potential by raising awareness about early childhood development and creating a shared vision of child well-being; Entry Point/Intake – parents/caregiver enrollment through relationship with early childhood organizations. Target neighborhoods where First Steps kindergarten scores show high incidence of not ready to learn; Staffing Requirements – NA; Research/Outcome Based – outcome; Target Population Age – birth through kindergarten age (with an emphasis on 0-3 year olds).

- **Parents Are First Teachers** – Parent Organization or Affiliation – Parents As Teachers National Center, Inc.; Auspices – government; Description – international child and family education/support program (3,300 programs in US) that empowers parents to be confident in child development knowledge as well as parenting skills; Mission/Goal – provide quality early childhood development and parenting skill information; Entry Point/Intake – referrals for PAFT services come from parent or agency requests. Service based on availability of Parent Educators. Some Parent Educators are grant funded and only serve families that fit grant criteria; Staffing Requirements – Parent Educators must have a bachelor's preferably in a social science; for those with other degrees, experience is accepted. All are certified by Parents As Teachers National Center; Research/Outcome Based – both; Target Population Age – families with children prenatal through five years of age.
- **Parent's Place** – Parent Organization or Affiliation – United Way Invest in Children; Auspices – nonprofit; Description – a resource center that provides improved access to services in the areas of family support and parent education; Mission/Goal – to equip families/caregivers in efforts to nurture children and help them succeed in school and life; Entry Point/Intake – any parent can call for information and referral; Staffing Requirements – Coordinator, master's degree in Child and Family Studies

with an emphasis in Parenting; Research/Outcome Based – outcome;  
Target Population Age – prenatal through school age.

- **Building Successful Partnerships** – Parent Organization or Affiliation – local PTA, national PTA; Auspices – nonprofit; Description – the participation of parents in every facet of education/development of children recognizing that parents are the primary influence; Mission/Goal – communicating, parenting, student learning, volunteering, advocacy and community collaboration; Entry Point/Intake – open house meetings each fall; Staffing Requirements – seasoned PTA volunteer trained by NPTA; Research/Outcome Based – research; Target Population Age – Hamilton County School students and parents.
- **Parent to Parent** – Parent Organization or Affiliation – National Organization: Passage Group; presented locally at McCallie School and GPS; Auspices – NA; Description – four 2 hour workshops with two training tapes and discussion groups on topics pertinent to the community; Mission/Goal – Passage Group: Help communities create a parent culture supportive of children and intolerant of negative influences which impact youth; Entry Point/Intake – public and private schools; Staffing Requirements – volunteer facilitator who has been through the course and wants to spread the philosophy; Research/Outcome Based – both; Target Population Age – primarily designed for parents with children grades 6-12.

### 3. The Social Realities of Changing Families

Families have changed dramatically in the last 25 years. “For most of this country’s history, the typical family was one with a stay-at-home mother and an employed father. Today, there are more women in the workforce than ever before. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2000 53% of married



mothers with infants (under the age 1) – and 59% of unmarried mothers with infants--were in the labor force. Among mothers with children under age 3, more than 60% were in the labor force in 2000. Four trends have altered dramatically the socioeconomic landscape. These are: parental employment, income and poverty, parental schooling, family structure.

a. Parental employment – “54% of mothers of infants work.” “Between 1975 and 1999, the proportion of children under 6 years of age with mothers in the labor force increased from 38.8% to 61.1%--a 36% increase.” “In 1994, 41% of children under age 5 with employed mothers worked the ‘nonday’ work shift.” (Defined as the majority of work hours being outside the 8 am to 4 pm time period). Insert poverty into the mix and it becomes 59% of parents of young children work the ‘nonday’ shift.

b. Income and poverty--Family resources matter. Three key resources for every family are: money, time, access to learning opportunities. Pair these three resources with three key factors of a parent’s own mental health, parent beliefs about child rearing and the home environments parents create. <sup>1</sup> “In 1997 22% of all young children in the US were poor.” “Young children, ages 0-5 are now the poorest age group in US society.” “Low income parents are at greater risk for depression and other forms of psychological distress.”

c. Parent education levels-- “Parental education levels are strongly associated with the home literacy environment, parental teaching styles and investments in a variety of resources that promote learning.”

d. Family Structure—Family structure and relationships have changed radically over the past four decades according to the Center for Law and Social Policy, CLASP, a national nonprofit organization founded in 1968 that conducts research, legal and policy analysis, technical assistance and advocacy on issues related to economic security for low income families with children. In its January

2004 Policy Brief No. 4, “Who are ‘Fragile Families’ and What Do We Know About Them?” it states that nearly one-third of all births now occur outside marriage. The proportions are even higher among poor and minority populations. Further the brief describes that cohabiting couples with children are increasingly common and that two out of five children will live in a cohabitating household at some point in their childhood. The term “fragile families” emphasizes both that these unmarried couples and their children are, in fact, families—and that they are at greater risk of poverty and of family dissolution than married families. These households are still often reported as single-parent households. The percent of births to unmarried mothers in Hamilton County has risen from 37% in 1997 to 38.8% in 2001(Data source, Tennessee’s Office of Health Statistics, Live Births, Hamilton, 1997 to 2001). It is certain that,” Unmarried women maintaining families have the highest risk of living in poverty.” “On average, children raised by single parents have lower levels of social and academic well-being than do children from intact marriages.”

#### 4. Scientific Evidence on Early Brain Development and its implications regarding parental involvement

According to Hart and Risley, in the study described in their book, Meaningful Differences, science has produced a large and compelling body of evidence on brain development and the critical influence of early care and learning on children’s success in school and beyond. Brain development is much more vulnerable to environmental influences than suspected. It’s not nature or nurture—it’s both. A stimulating environment is essential to brain growth. The magnitude of children’s accomplishments depends less on the material and educational advantages available in the home and more on the amount of experience children accumulate with parenting that provides language, diversity, affirmative feedback, symbolic emphasis, gentle guidance, and responsiveness. By the time children are 3 years old, even intensive intervention cannot make up for the

differences in the amount of experience children have received from their parents. If children could be given better parenting, intervention might be unnecessary.

5. Return on the dollar on the investment in a child's early years and recognition that families and parents involved with their child's education in infancy and beyond translates into involvement in a child's formal education in school.

The Education Commission of the States is a nonprofit interstate organization that helps governors, legislators, state education officials and others identify, develop and implement public policies to improve student learning at all levels. The Commission indicates in its report, Starting Early, Starting Now, A Policy Makers Guide to Early Care and Education and School Success, 2001, that there is mounting evidence from credible studies that high-quality early care and education programs are cost effective, help prevent later, more costly social interventions and have long-lasting effects, (significantly higher math and reading scores, lower grade-retention rates, higher high school completion rates and significantly lower juvenile arrest rates).

In the National Association of Counties report, "Proactive Funding Strategies for Home Visitation," it references, "A study completed by Michigan's Children's Trust determined that if every parent were offered home visitation in a child's early years, for every dollar spent \$19 could be saved in costs associated with child welfare and social services." It also indicates that, "The Chicago Parent Child Center program, largely based on the same tenets of early childhood home-based services which focus on literacy, school readiness and parental involvement found that for an average investment of \$6,730 per child for 18 months of participation, the preschool program generated a total return of \$47,759. The Starting Early policy brief and guide states, "For every dollar invested in high quality, comprehensive early care and education, society saves \$7.16 in welfare, special education and criminal justice costs."

Yet a third source, the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis in its December 2003, Supplement, The ABCs of ECD, A Discussion of the Economics of Early Childhood

Development, describes, “a well-managed and well-funded early childhood development program...includes home visits as well as center-based programs to supplement and enhance the ability of parents to provide a solid foundation for children.” It goes on to say that the return on investment from early childhood programs is extraordinary, calculating the real internal rate of return for the Perry School program at 16 per cent with a yield of over 12 percent internal rate of return for society in general. The report states,” the conventional view of economic development typically includes company headquarters, office towers, entertainment centers, and professional sports stadiums and arenas....in the future any proposed economic development list should have early childhood development at the top. Early childhood development programs result in better working public schools; more educated workers, less crime and should be viewed as economic development.

6. Family involvement in secondary school achievement is an important variable in student success.

Connors and Epstein (1994) synthesize the research and conclude that activities such as holding high expectations for students, homework assistance, and sincere adult guidance in balancing and monitoring activities lead to high achieving high school students.

After synthesizing sixty-six studies on family involvement, Henderson and Berla (1995) reported that studies have documented the following benefits for students: higher grades and test scores, better attendance and homework completion, fewer placements in special education, more positive attitudes and behavior, higher graduation rates, and greater enrollment in post secondary education.

Henderson and Mapp (2002) synthesized fifty-one additional studies and found that regardless of the income or background, students whose families were engaged with school were more likely to: earn higher grades and enroll in higher-level programs, stay in school and enroll in postsecondary education. This research summary also found that school initiatives to create programs and special efforts to involve and engage families

did make a difference in student academic performance. Families, teachers, and schools can benefit from school/family partnerships. These important relationships lead to improving parent's knowledge of their children's development, their ability to parent, their ability to assist their children with school and learning, and the quality of relationships between all stakeholders (Epstein 1992)

Under Steven Constantino's leadership (1995-2000) at Stonewall Jackson High School in Prince William County, Va., SAT verbal scores rose 46 points and average math score 50 points. The High School's International Baccalaureate program increased from 139 in 1995 to 509 in 2000. (This is advanced placement classes.). In 2000, Stonewall Jackson High School was listed among the "Top 100" High Schools in the country. Stonewall Jackson High School is located in Manassas, VA, 35 miles from Washington, D.C. It has 2600 students in grades 9-12, very diverse, 20 different languages spoken within the school families, low income families to very wealthy and about 21 % on free and reduced lunch. When Constantino arrived at Stonewall Jackson HS, the school was in crisis from discipline to test scores.

Parent attitudes, measured by a survey, showed a significant increase in parent satisfaction, 34% in 1995, 59% in 2000. Teacher satisfaction in 1995 was rated 39% and in 2001 is 76%. Student satisfaction in 1995 was 31% and in 2000 was 43%.

Steven Constantino started many new programs while principal at Stonewall Jackson High School and one was Family Engagement. He contributes all the programs to the success of the school but especially Family Engagement. Time Magazine (May 21, 2001) selected Stonewall as the High School of the Year. The school was selected for both its commitment to the involvement of parents and the challenging academic programs that are available to all students.

## IV. FINDINGS

1. Research demonstrates when parents are involved; students achieve more, regardless of socioeconomic status, ethnic/racial background, or the parent's education level. *The most accurate predictor of a child's achievement is not income or social status, but the extent to which a child's family is able to:*

- Create a home environment that encourages learning and nurtures their child's physical, mental, social and spiritual education
- Communicate high, yet reasonable, expectations for their child's achievement and future careers
- Acquire knowledge of how their child develops in their early years and how their child functions in the school environment
- Involve themselves in their child's education at home, at school and in the community

2. It is essential to obtain parent engagement in their child's education from birth. Reviewing the current research on brain development proved an eye opener for Some task force members. There was a realization that a model public school system in 2008 will require engaging parents long before their child walks through the school's doors.

3. There is the need to fill the gaps and build a high quality system of early care and education in Hamilton County. Early care and education in Hamilton County has several efforts and initiatives underway. None of these efforts touch all parents/families in Hamilton County. It became evident that there is a need to identify and assess current efforts and services being offered regarding

usage, accessibility, availability and services provided. In addition, there is a need to identify all organizations, agencies and people who deal directly with parents (particularly those “at-risk”) from pregnancy to birth to schools, health clinics, etc. and the services most needed.

A troubling observation is made in the book, Early Childhood Programs for a New Century, 2003, published by the Child Welfare League of America, the third book in the University of Illinois at Chicago Series on Children and Youth, that has a focus on the early years of life as the foundation for healthy and constructive childhood, youth and adult life. “In short, early care and education is not so much a system as a non-system—a conglomeration of programs and policies largely disconnected from one another and from other levels of the educational system. Filling the gaps and building a high quality system of early care and education requires the attention and investment of many people.”

4. The Task Force further finds, that Hamilton County, the school system and the community should assist/support parents in their role as the primary caregivers and educators of their children. The economic future and well being of Hamilton County depend on it.

## ***V. RECOMMENDATIONS***

The task force recognizes that more than change is needed – a profound shift by the community at large and the school system is needed in how to involve parents in their child’s education.

The Parent Involvement Task Force recommends the following:

### **1. COMMUNITY WIDE EDUCATION EFFORT**

Launch a community-wide education effort that spells out the critical importance of the first five years of life and the absolute necessity of parent(s) involvement in their child’s education from birth to adulthood.

The County should partner with the Chamber of Commerce, the Hamilton County School board, the PTA, business and civic organizations to meet the goals:

- everyone understanding the critical role parents play in the development and education of their children
- parent friendly policies that promote parent involvement

The first step in meeting this recommendation is to hold a community forum/event with nationally known speakers, (Dr. Jack P. Shonkoff, Dr. Neal Halfon, Dr. Pam Schiller, etc.) to spark public dialogue among community leaders. The second step in the community-wide education effort is to follow the successful, “Getting School Ready” model of Seattle and King County, Washington. It brings together parents and families in small –group, “Community Conversations” about the importance of their involvement in every facet of their children’s education and development from pregnancy to birth to adulthood. This will require the recruitment and training of Conversation Group facilitators.

2. Establish a comprehensive parent involvement/school readiness program through a centralized interagency referral clearinghouse/data collection and connection point. The program should include:

- Home visitation
- Parent involvement coordinators in schools
- Formal links between early childcare providers and the public school system
- Resource centers

The goal is to serve all parents in Hamilton County with a priority on identifying at-risk families to determine if the services currently being provided meet the families physically and educationally where they are. Steps to include are:

- Identify the organizations, agencies and people who deal directly with the families (particularly at-risk) from pregnancy to birth-schools (pregnant girls attending classes), health clinics, hospitals, churches



- Identify areas in the county with most at-risk families (use 2000 census information to look at birth weight, poverty, etc.)
- Assess Neighborhood Reading Centers, Parents as First Teachers, Invest in Children and other services being offered as to their usage, accessibility, availability and services provided
- Identify services most needed by the population being served

The County Mayor should appoint an Interagency Parent Involvement and School Readiness Council to facilitate and implement the program. Grants should be sought as well as existing agencies/programs meshing existing efforts into a seamless system of services.

3. The Hamilton County Department of Education should approve a policy requiring development and implementation of a Family Involvement Plan (FIP) in every school. The plan is to follow the National Parents Teachers Association standards for parent involvement. Each FIP should have the following components:

- Parent Advocacy to ensure a parent voice at the school and county level with issues connected to children
- Establish and encourage an active PTA in every school
- System-side volunteer requirement for each family. Each school will set the number of hours and/or target number of volunteers
- Training for principals for development and implementation of the plan and effective use of a parent involvement coordinator
- Training for teachers and other administrators about effective parent involvement
- Attention to creating a welcoming school environment for parents and community members
- Parent Forums to encourage dialogue between parents and school
- Creation of a Parent Resource Room/space to include community and school resources on parent involvement, effective parenting, etc.

- For schools that have a voice-mail message system in place, encourage broad use of the system to communicate with parents about daily homework assignments, events, field trips, etc. (Bridge Project of 1995, which involved 104 schools showed an increase of 487% in parent contacts by adding voice-messaging system to their phones)
- Add a Family Liaison to the Parent School Community Office to work directly with schools and agencies.
- Make Black Board or similar program available system wide for parents to access information about their child's grades, behavior, attendance, etc.

4. The Hamilton County Department of Education improve communication between parents, students and school personnel by:

- Requiring Parent/Student Orientation for parents and students entering Kindergarten, Sixth grade and Ninth grade
- Establish Parent Mentors as described in "A Step-by-Step Guide to Engage and Empower Parents at Your School, 2003, Project for School Innovation, Dorchester, MA".
- Require Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences in every school for every child-minimum of 2 per year
- Consider the use of schools as neighborhood resource centers when the building is not in use as a school

# Curriculum & Reading Task Force

Chairman: Tom Kinser

# **CURRICULUM AND READING TASK FORCE**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The dozens of volunteers who worked many hours over the past several months are pleased to present the final report of the Curriculum and Reading Task Force. Four subcommittees were formed and the format is reports in each of these areas:

- **Arts and Extracurricular Activities**
- **Health Education**
- **Reading**
- **Vocational Education**

### **Overview**

Members of this committee and its task forces enjoyed this work immensely and felt it important and relevant.

The summit process has created an enormous community interest in educational improvements.

Education of our children is obviously a compelling issue in our county and our nation. A set of forces are operating in the world that require individuals to be well educated to get good jobs and to function in society and enjoy a good life.

Social change is rapid. Globalization of the economy will increase its pace and impact. Technology and new communications are rapidly changing the way we enjoy recreation at home, and cause fundamental change in the workplace.

Hard physical labor is rapidly being exported to third world economies. Good jobs will increasingly require sophisticated levels of math, science, language skills, good communications skills, an ability to work together, and comfort with computers.

Reading skills at a high level are basic to those going to college, and to others going directly to work who encounter specific training for their job or industry.

The pace of change will remain high and reading is the central skill required for lifelong learning and adapting as the world evolves.

The summit process has been exciting and energizing and the next steps will be crucial. We wish the political leaders great wisdom in reviewing the reports and leading the schools to higher levels of achievement.

Most of us learned a lot about Hamilton County schools during this work. There is a consensus that the schools are better than we knew and that there are substantial innovations underway that are successful and deserve to be spread more broadly. Dr Jesse Register and his staff were positive participants in this process.

Our goal should be set higher. We need a stretch but we can do it. Good schools require a lot of work and extensive community support. A future with the kids at the center; supported by a lean but adequately funded Hamilton County Department of Education, with good teachers and involved parents is in our reach. Continuing support from business, media foundations, and the entire community is essential.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT SUMMARIES**

### **Arts**

Participation in the arts correlates with high achievement in reading and standardized tests. The local arts community has been a generous and energetic supporter of public schools.

- Everyone could receive instruction in arts including visual and music K-12.
- Support after school activities.
- Use art to help reading, retain teachers, and involve parents.

### **Health Education**

The issue of obesity has emerged dramatically as a problem in the United States. Tennessee is one of the least physically active states.

The schools should play a vital part in educating students about good health habits. This should involve:

- Thirty minutes a day of physical activity for every able student.
- Comprehensive nutrition education.
- Healthy choices should be available in snacks and beverages in vending machines.
- A community-wide initiative concerning obesity is planned and should compliment school efforts.

## **Reading**

This task force concluded “There is nothing more important to the long-term success of this community and each of its citizens, than the ability of each child to read well and at grade level, by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.”

The recommendations are in three sections:

### **Hamilton County Department of Education**

- A. Make Reading the No. 1 Priority
- B. Adopt the 90% Reading Goal
- C. Teach Teachers to Teach Reading
- D. Adopt a Uniform Early Reading Assessment Tool
- E. Increase School Reading Resources
- F. Reduce Class Size
- G. Place a Family Reading Specialist in Every Elementary and Middle School

### **Community – Establish A Comprehensive Community Reading Program**

- A. Educate and Engage the Community
- B. Engage the Childcare & Pre-K Community
- C. Engage and Enlist the Media
- D. Enhance Community Reading Assets

### **Form A Community-Wide Strategic Planning Group To Develop A Clear Picture Of What is Necessary To Meet The 90% Goal, Beginning With These Recommendations**

- A. Composition
- B. Tasked To

### **Vocational Education**

There is a general agreement that current approaches to vocational education are not working and a substantial overhaul is in order.

But exciting new directions are emerging to transform this entire area. The single path should be continued and the academy concept should be developed across the system. The academy is a concentration within a school in a particular trade. The construction academy at East Ride and health care academy in Red Bank are successful and should be replicated.

This exciting concept will take time and requires the support of the business community and school leaders.

We invite your attention to the detailed reports.



## Arts and Extracurricular Subcommittee Report

### 1. Summary

The Arts and Extracurricular Subcommittee was charged with identifying arts programs that enhance the present core curriculum (including extracurricular activities) that would lead Hamilton County to be a national model public education system. The Subcommittee also explored connections of the arts to other Task Force areas, such as reading instruction, teacher recruitment and retention, community involvement, and parent involvement.

The members of the committee visited schools, interviewed principals and consulted with Allied Arts' Director of Arts in Education. Resources included *Champions of Change: The Impact of Arts on Learning*; *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development*; *Model Standards for Licensing Classroom Teachers and Specialists in the Arts: A Resource for State Dialogue*; *Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation: High Schools for the New Millennium*; and *Making Meaning Through Literature and the Arts* by Claudia Cornett.

### 2. Findings

The Subcommittee found that instruction in the arts and extracurricular activities are two separate issues. Instruction in the arts takes place during school hours, while extracurricular programs refer to before- or after-school arts, athletic, and community service activities.

HCDE recognizes the same core subject areas as the U.S. Department of Education's New Child Left Behind Act. Each of these core areas have standards and benchmarks for students to complete as part of their academic requirements.

The definition of core subjects in the No Child Left Behind Act is located in Title IX, Part A, Section 9101(1)(D)(11), Definitions.

Here is how the definition reads:

(11) CORE ACADEMIC SUBJECTS- The term 'core academic subjects' means English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography.

The Subcommittee looked at local and national research and models that demonstrated student participation and instruction in the arts had a positive effect on overall academic growth as did participation in after-school activities.

A study in *Champions of Change: Involvement in the Arts and Human Development* showed that students with high arts experiences significantly scored better on standardized tests, reading, and history compared to other students. These students that actively participated in the arts were much less likely to drop out and were much less bored with school than other students. (Attachment A)

The positive effect of the arts on standardized test scores was also seen in schools that participate in the Allied Arts of Greater Chattanooga's Arts Initiative School Program. This program provided \$35,000-50,000 a year for the past five years to local non-magnet elementary schools. The goal of the program was for the schools to document the effects of arts immersion in their school. The four schools that participated from 1999-2003 showed significantly higher gains on test scores compared to HCDE averages scores and schools in their immediate area. These positive results were also reflected in students attending the Fine Arts and Museum Magnet schools. (Attachment B)

The U.S. Department of Education also supports before-and after-school programs that are designed to enhance academic performance and to provide enrichment, recreational and social services. The U.S. Department of Education's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers program provides grant funds for these non-school hour programs.

A study in *Champions of Change: Imaginative Actuality, Learning in the Arts during the Non-school Hours*, demonstrated the value of high-quality after-school programs. Students that participated in after-school arts programs were shown to be more likely to read for pleasure, perform community service, and have higher self-esteem than other students. (Attachment C)

A study in *Critical Links: Do Extracurricular Activities Protect Against Early School Dropout?* reports that students who do participate in after-school activities are less likely to drop out of middle of high school than other students. (Attachment D)

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, while focusing their goal on the creation of smaller High Schools, has created a "Gates Triangle" for school success. The triangle focuses on the importance of Personalizing the Instruction, Active/ In-depth Learning, and Exhibitions of Learning. Again, the arts can be a very effective strategy in each of these areas. (Attachment E)

Connection of the arts to other Task Force areas was noted by the subcommittee.

#### Reading Instruction:

Claudia Cornett's book, *Making Meaning Through Literature and the Arts*, focuses on methods of enhancing literacy instruction through arts activities. Embracing Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theories, Cornett's book provides practical methods to include arts instruction to reach students through movement, sound, and sight.

#### Teacher Recruitment and Retention:

In a new document developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers, the arts play an effective role implementing model standards for licensing classroom teachers. Ten core principles in their report from their Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) directly relate to the value of arts. (Attachment F)

Particularly Principle #3 – teachers need to understand how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instruction opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.

Principle #4 – teachers need to understand and use a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students’ development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.

Principle #10 – Teacher should foster relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support student’s learning and well-being.

The methodology of arts education supports each of these Principles.

Arts programs in local schools have also been used as a recruitment tool. Principals participating in the Allied Arts programs have indicated that the grant funds have been an incentive to attract new teachers and retain existing ones at their school.

Community Involvement:

The subcommittee noted the vast involvement of the local arts community that spends over \$1 million dollars each year on programs for school children. The committee also noted the necessity for community groups to help fill in the gaps within the schools by providing staffing and programming for programs during and after-school.

Parent Involvement:

The arts exhibitions and programs have served as an effective tool to increase parental involvement. The hallways and classrooms at the open houses at the Normal Park Museum Magnet are packed with parents, as are the PTA programs featuring arts performances. It was noted that if the students participate in a program that they are proud of, their enthusiasm will attract their parents.

### **3. Recommendations and Implementation**

A. Every child will receive instruction in and through the arts.

Whether a child participates in advanced gifted programs or has special needs, attends a suburban school or an inner-city school, it is important that each child creates and achieves to their greatest potential.

Implementation - HCDE:

- Continue support of Music programs K-12, as well as Dance and Theatre programs, Grades 6-12.
- Expand visual arts programs to serve all students grades K-12 (currently only funded for grades 6-12) by 2007-08 school year. (To implement, UTC Department of Visual Art, and UTC Department of Education would need to be involved to properly certify the visual arts teachers)
- Continue to support local Teaching Artists and Professional Development for classroom teachers leading to instruction of all core subject areas through the arts activities. (To implement, Southeast Center for Education in the Arts and Allied Arts would assist and provide professional development programming)

B. Support before- and after-school activities that promote involvement in arts, athletics, and community service.

Implementation - HCDE:

- Maximize the positive impact of before- and after-school programs through strategic programming connected to the School Improvement Plans. (To implement, Lights On, PASE, and Urban League which currently offer before- and after-school programs would need to be involved with assistance from Allied Arts and other community agencies)

Implementation - Community Organizations:

- Expand support for community resources to provide effective instruction within before- and after-school programs. (Lights On, PASE, Urban League, Allied Arts – coordinated through HCDE)

C. The arts will be embraced as a strategy for reading instruction, teacher recruitment and retention, community involvement, and parent involvement.

Implementation – Education Summit Task Forces:

- Explore arts-related approaches to these areas with members of the Reading Subcommittee and the Teacher Recruitment and Retention, Community Involvement and Parental Involvement Task Forces

Implementation – Community Organizations:

- Expand recent efforts to train teachers and artists in methodology that recognizes arts activities and experiences as a viable strategy for literacy instruction. (Southeast Center for Education in the Arts, Allied Arts-coordinated through HCDE)

Implementation – HCDE:

- Promote the arts as a strategy to meet individual goals stated in School Improvement Plans. (To implement, Allied Arts would provide assistance)

## HEALTH EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

### 1. **Summary – Charge and Scope**

- ❖ Committee Charter Goal: To examine current HCDE policies and practices regarding student wellness and to make recommendations for improvement on issues related:
  - What we teach about Long Term Health
  - What we model about Long Term Health
  - How we deal with Short Term Health that impacts education

### 2. **Findings (See detailed list of sources attached)**

- ❖ Obesity is currently a problem in Tennessee for our students and all citizens.
- ❖ Tennessee is 49<sup>th</sup> in CDC rankings of physical activity.
- ❖ Distinct linear correlation exists between physical fitness scores and academic achievement.
- ❖ Growth of chronic illnesses drains time and financial resources from HCDE staff and budget. In particular a growing incidence of diabetes, asthma, and allergies are being recorded for Hamilton County students.

### 3. **Recommendations:**

- ❖ Provide each Hamilton County student with a minimum of 30 minutes of physical activity every day.
- ❖ Provide a comprehensive health and nutrition education program for all students.
- ❖ Provide healthy nutrition choices for students.
  - Implement change to Healthy vending choices only (reference : San Antonio, TX Model and Coca-Cola Bottling Plan)
  - School Lunch and Breakfast alternatives
- ❖ Adequately staff each school district with school nurses to deal with chronic illness so that teachers can focus on education.
- ❖ Community-Wide Wellness Initiative that focuses on Nutrition, Exercise, Health Education, etc.
  - This initiative should educate and motivate all citizens, including parents, students, and teachers.
  - The school system needs to be an integral part of this initiative but it must have broader support with other community institutions involved.
  - Provide HCDE employees with wellness education that focuses on healthy lifestyle choices.

### 4. **Implementation**

- ❖ The implementation of these recommendations will fall to the HCDE. The structure and organization to support these initiatives exist today with the HCDE.
- ❖ Added resources will be required in the form of additional staff and curriculum changes. A timetable and phase-in plan needs to be developed.

- ❖ A more detailed analysis needs to be completed to assess the costs and resources needed for implementing these recommendations. The cost will be impacted by the transition timetable developed by the HCDE.

### **Detailed list of sources**

- 61% of Tennesseans are either overweight or obese, and the percentage continues to increase. \*
- If this trend continues by 2010 more than 35% of Tennesseans will be obese (a tripling in 20 years)
- Our children and adolescence are not doing any better. The percentage of overweight children and adolescence has been increasing over 4 decades. A rise from 4-5% in 1963 to 15% in 2000.\*\* From the 2002 Hamilton County Youth Survey, 15% of respondents were at risk for overweight, while 12% are overweight.\*\*\*\*
- The root causes of obesity are poor nutrition and inactivity.
- 71.6% of Tennesseans do not eat the recommended 5 fruits and vegetables.\* (Hamilton County Youth Survey reported 85% did not meet the 5 a day recommendation). \*\*\*\*
- 33.6% of Tennesseans have No leisure time physical activity. (Note Tennessee ranks 49<sup>th</sup> with this rate).\* Hamilton County Youth Survey reported 20% of respondents were considered to be fitness oriented, and 8% sedentary (no physical activity). \*\*\*\*
- 2002 CDE study of 954,000 students included a statistical analysis indicating a distinct and linear correlation between students' academic achievement and fitness scores; higher academic performance was positively related to higher levels of fitness with the greatest academic gains in students who met three or more physical fitness standards. This association was greater in mathematics than in reading.
- Another study found that spending more time in physical education did not have harmful effects on the standardized academic achievement test scores of elementary school students; in fact, there was some evidence that participation in a 2-year health-related physical education program had several significant favorable effects on academic achievement. \*\*\*

\*2002 CDC Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System

\*\*CDC/NCHS, NHES and NHANES

\*\*\*"Promoting Better Health for Young People through Activity and Sports."

Fall 2000 Report to the President from the Secretary of Health & Human Services and the Secretary of Education.

(Full Report – [cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/presphysactrpt](http://cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/presphysactrpt))

\*\*\*\*Hamilton County 2002 Youth Behavior Risk Survey

\*\*\*\*\*California Department of Education (CDE) 2002 study of 954,000 students in grades 5, 7, and 9.

## Reading Subcommittee Report

**VISION STATEMENT:** *We can positively change the lives of more children, more quickly and more profoundly, with longer lasting effects, by teaching them to read at grade level by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.<sup>2</sup>*

**COMMUNITY READING GOAL:** *At least 90% of all students will read at grade level by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and thereafter will maintain their grade level equivalence.*

### CONCLUSION OF THE COMMITTEE:

**THERE IS NOTHING MORE IMPORTANT TO THE LONG-TERM SUCCESS OF THIS COMMUNITY AND EACH OF ITS CITIZENS, THAN THE ABILITY OF EACH CHILD TO READ WELL AND AT GRADE LEVEL, BY THE END OF THE 3<sup>RD</sup> GRADE.**

## 1. Summary

a. Research indicates that the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade year is the critical point in time, by which a student must have acquired the ability to recognize the alphabet, sound out the letters (phonics), blend those sounds together (phonemic awareness), begin understanding word patterns (fluency), steadily increase their knowledge and exposure to words (vocabulary), and gain meaning and understanding from what they are reading (comprehension). If these five skills are developed to grade-level or above by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade, a child is much more likely to: succeed in school, go on to college or have a better opportunity for skilled employment, have fewer health problems, have fewer disciplinary problems, and have increased earning potential over their lifetime.

But, it is equally apparent that *the task of teaching a child to read – starts with parents – in the home, long before a child starts kindergarten*. Our approach then, must engage the entire community and not just place the task of teaching reading skills on the Hamilton County School System.

It is therefore critical that the entire community comes together and realizes that teaching reading skills extends beyond the classroom into the homes, businesses, and churches and throughout the community as a whole. If we are to be successful in our schools, we must change the environment leading up to the time when we send our children to begin their formal learning. And the single most important factor in

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<sup>2</sup> The Vision Statement is a paraphrase of a quote found at pg. 9 in “*The 90% Reading Goal*”, L. Fielding, N. Kerr, P. Rosier, New Foundation Press (1998). The Community Reading Goal expands upon, the goal developed by Kennewick School District in Kennewick, Washington.

improving our schools lies with our parents. Parents must be engaged, and active in helping their child learn the pre-skills necessary for them to have a better chance of succeeding.

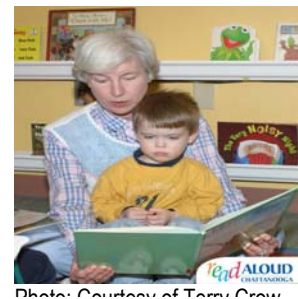
*b. Task and Approach of the Reading Subcommittee*

The reading subcommittee was tasked with assessing the current state of reading instruction within Hamilton County, analyzing the teaching approaches that work, and recommending what assets must be marshaled from the community, school system, local governments, businesses, charitable organizations, and parents to ensure that we do a better job of teaching our children to read at or above grade level as they progress through school. To do this, a committee of representatives from all aspects of our community, as well as personnel from the School District Central Administration, principals and teachers<sup>3</sup> have:

- visited elementary and middle schools where reading instruction was being given;
- heard presentations from K-3 teachers, school principals, and HCDE curriculum specialists
- spoken with childcare and pre-K program directors who have had great success in teaching reading;
- read and evaluated several national and district-based reading studies<sup>4</sup>
- examined data regarding reading proficiency of Hamilton County students and Hamilton County residents.

From this work, the reading subcommittee is encouraged that there are many good activities happening within the Hamilton County Public School System. But, it is also evident that with the support of the community, much more can be done to help prepare our children to become good readers.

*Although there is no “magic cure” for illiteracy, the one single activity that best assures that a child is able to easily learn to read, is reading aloud to them at least 20 minutes of each day from the time they are born until the time they finish the 5<sup>th</sup> grade.*



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<sup>3</sup> The members of the Reading subcommittee, and those providing invaluable assistance, are listed in Appendix 1.

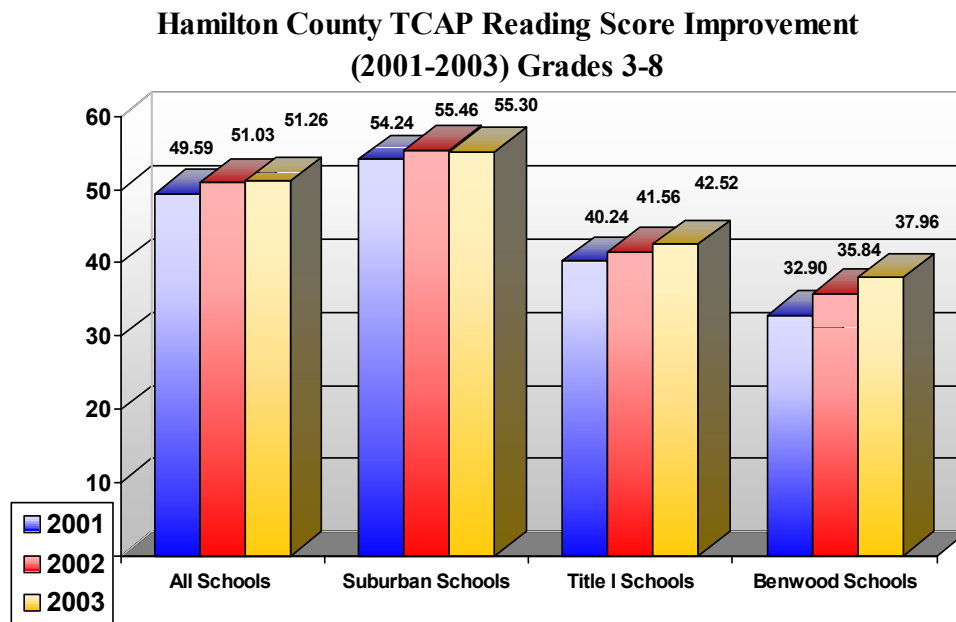
<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 2 for an extensive Bibliography of material read and consulted by committee members.



## 2. Findings

**a. The Problem:** In 2003, the average scaled Reading scores of Tennessee's 4<sup>th</sup> graders were higher than only 6 other states.<sup>5</sup> And, although Tennessee ranked 33<sup>rd</sup> nationally in per capita income, Tennessee Schools ranked 44<sup>th</sup> in the nation in terms of education expenditures per pupil.<sup>6</sup> Tennessee was 48<sup>th</sup> in the nation in percentage of adults who hold college degrees and 41<sup>st</sup> in the percentage of adults who have earned high school diplomas or equivalency certificates. Not surprisingly, Tennessee has one of the highest students per teacher ratios in the nation.

Hamilton County has the top elementary school (K-5) in the state where 100% of the school's students read at or above grade level. Unfortunately, 3 of the lowest 5 schools in the state in terms of percentage of students reading at or above grade level can also be found in Hamilton County. Locally, the three-year trend in reading scores for K-



\*Source: HCDE Accountability Briefing, (Derived from Tennessee State Report Card)

8 students shows a very strong upward trend. Good progress is being made.

But, this disparity in performance between high and low scoring schools within the same school district highlights the fact that not all children receive the same emphasis on reading in the home, nor do they receive the same degree of assistance at school.

Statistics show that for those who cannot read at grade level by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade:

- Seventy-four percent (74%) will remain poor readers in the ninth grade;
- They are 4 times more likely to have disciplinary problems in school;
- They are 8 times more likely to drop out of school;

<sup>5</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS (NAEP),

<sup>6</sup> Kids count 2001, found at [www.tennesseeanytime.org](http://www.tennesseeanytime.org)

- Over their lifetime, they are likely to earn, on average, 35% less income than a child who reads at or above grade level.

For certain areas within the county, an additional factor erodes the ability of the school system to provide comprehensive reading training. Where there are high concentrations of rental homes and apartments, and government-subsidized housing, schools in these areas experience an estimated 30% turnover in their student population on an annual basis. This higher level of transient population makes it difficult for school staff to provide continuity in teaching reading. It is not unusual for a student to arrive at a school in the middle of a quarter and be gone within ten weeks. This is extremely counterproductive to providing consistent teaching to the specific needs of that child.

One dramatic evidence of a child's receptiveness to learning when he or she enters school is the amount of daily verbal interaction the child has with his or her parents. In their 3-year study entitled "*Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children*," authors Betty Hart and Todd Risley observed some startling differences between the interactions of the parents and children of differing socio-economic groups. In their study, the authors observed and recorded one hour of parent-child interaction, each month from the time the children were 10 months old until they were 36 months old.

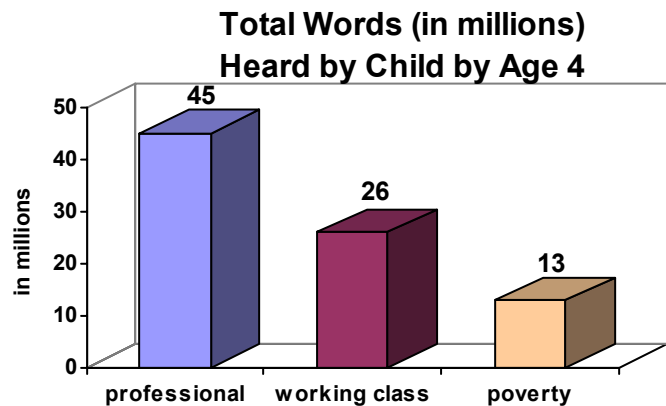
	<i>Families</i>					
	13 Professional		23 Working-class		6 Welfare	
Measures and Scores	Parent	Child	Parent	Child	Parent	Child
Pretest Score	41		31		14	
IQ score at age 3		117		107		79
Recorded Vocabulary size	2,176	1,116	1,498	749	974	525
Average utterances per hour <sup>a</sup>	487	310	301	223	176	168
Average different words per hour	382	297	251	216	167	149

a – Parent utterances and different words were averaged over 13-36 months of child age.

Child utterances and different words were averaged for the four monthly observations when the children were 33-36 months old

\*Source: B. Hart & T. Risley, *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children*, Brookes Publishing (5<sup>th</sup> ed. 2003), p. 176.

Regardless of the socio-economic level, all 42 families said and did the same things with their children. But, the meaningful difference was that parents who spoke with their children more often each hour, with words of affirmation rather than correction, had children who were more verbal and displayed a larger vocabulary than where parent-child interaction was lower. When the daily averages for each group of children were then projected across four years, the four-year-old child from the professional family will have heard 45 million words, the working-class child 26 million, and the poor child only 13 million. All three will show up for kindergarten on the same day, but the child of a professional will be better prepared to learn to read than the other children.



Source: J. Trelease, *The Read Aloud Handbook* Penguin Books (5<sup>th</sup> ed. 2001) , p. 14.

The importance of this point in their research when applied to Hamilton County, is that a literacy-rich environment with sustained exposure to reading aloud in both the home and in the childcare/pre-K environment, can compensate for poor family socio-economic conditions and provide a child with the opportunity to excel. The key to our success as a community will be our ability to educate and motivate parents at all income levels, to see the true value of their one-on-one interaction with their child to make an “investment” of time in their future.

***b. The Solution:*** a well-known education axiom states:

***“From kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, children learn to read. Thereafter they read to learn.”***

But, more accurately, children begin learning to read from the moment they are born. It is in the first 5 years of their lives that the pattern is most often set for their ability to learn when they enter school. If we, as a community, are to be successful in raising the level of literacy in our schools, decreasing the number of school dropouts, and increasing the percentage of adults obtaining college degrees so that we can be competitive in the global economy, then we must come together as a whole community to help our children learn to read.

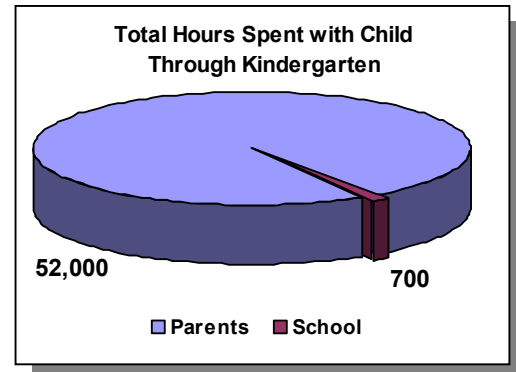


Photo: Courtesy of Terry Crow – 505-4429

Probably the most critical component to the success of this endeavor is assisting parents, childcare and pre-school providers, to work with their children long before the child begins attending school. This community has wonderful

resources and motivation for partnering to accomplish this critical task. As a community ... all parents, teachers, school administrators, local governments, businesses, child care specialists, foundations, churches and individuals must focus on the task of how all of us, together, can help our children be more prepared for the world they will face in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Fundamental to that preparation is the ability to **READ**. To enhance the prospects for those children to be able to read at grade level by the end of the third grade, however, they must come to the school system with a much richer exposure to reading and literacy. And this can only be accomplished outside the school system in the homes and in the community. In this vein, **READING ALOUD** to a child at least 20 minutes per day from birth through 5<sup>th</sup> grade, is the single most helpful activity for nurturing children who are prepared to learn to read. It is also important to note that at the conclusion of a child's kindergarten year, the school system will have had that child for approximately 700 hours, while the family will have had them over 52,000 hours. Time with parents, guardians or family, if wisely invested, will be the key to enhancing the child's ability to learn to read at school.



Source: Gerald W. Bracey, "Time Outside School," *Phi Delta Kappan*, (Sep. 1991), p. 88)

**We must mobilize our community to embrace "reading aloud" to all children from birth to kindergarten and, that we place a stronger emphasis on teaching our children to read in grades K-3.**

Moreover, there is much positive progress within Hamilton County's schools to enhance the reading level of our children. Through Benwood Foundation (in lower grades) and Carnegie Grants (in upper grades) administered by the Public Education Foundation, inner city reading scores have risen dramatically over the past three years. Through teacher professional development, K-3 teachers are receiving better training on how to teach students to read. And, even where funding is limited, "grass roots" reading programs are achieving excellent increases in reading achievement scores. But, more funding is needed to ensure all K-5 teachers receive concentrated professional development and training on multiple methods for teaching reading employing differentiated instructional techniques.

***We must also ensure that all Hamilton County School System teachers (especially K-3) receive better and more sustained training on how to teach students to read.***

### 3. Recommendations

#### **Hamilton County Department of Education -**

- A. ***Make Reading the No. 1 Priority*** – All K-5 teachers shall adjust their teaching schedules to make reading the primary focus of their classroom instruction for a minimum of 120 minutes per day to include:

1. Reading aloud at least 30 minutes every day in the classroom; and,
2. Sustained silent reading at least 30 minutes every day in the classroom.
3. All 6-12 grade teachers will emphasize literacy in their topical classes and help to identify struggling readers for additional instruction and assist where needed.



Photo: Courtesy of Terry Crow – 505-4429

- B. ***Adopt the 90% Reading Goal*** – the Hamilton County Board of Education should adopt an aggressive standard for reading success. The “90% Goal” recognizes that special education, English as a second language, and learning disabled children comprise approximately 12% of the student population.

- C. ***Teach Teachers to Teach Reading*** –

1. Within the School District - The HCDE should implement a sustained program to teach **every teacher** in the county how to teach reading - focusing on multiple decoding techniques, effective use of individual assessment tools, and differentiated instruction – (such training should be site-based and occur on a monthly basis)
2. Within Local Universities - teach all education majors how to teach reading as a part of their core curriculum. Student teaching and practicums will emphasize hands on experience and multiple approaches.
3. The HCDE will conduct a summer “Literacy Institute” to teach teachers, interventionists, education majors and parents how to teach reading

- D. ***Adopt a Uniform Early Reading Assessment Tool*** - The HCDE should research available assessment tools for evaluating early progress in reading and adopt “best assessment practices” for use countywide in all K-5 classes. Such assessment tool(s) should provide a uniform

formative testing/ assessment program to allow system-wide monitoring of reading progress and provide for early identification of individual student strengths and weaknesses. Among the possible alternatives are “Star Early Literacy Assessment,” “Dibels,” “Ames-Webb,” and “Reading First.”

- E. ***Increase School Reading Resources*** - Increase the numbers of books in every K-3 classroom and K-5 school library

1. Minimum 500 different titles per classroom, *in the classroom* (goal of 1,000)
2. Minimum 10,000 different titles per library (goal of 20,000)



- F. ***Reduce Class Size*** – The members of the Reading Committee recognize that “class size,” especially during the kindergarten through third grade years, dramatically impacts the ability of a teacher to deliver effective instruction. Research indicates that “18” is the ideal maximum class size for any class during these years.

Thus, notwithstanding any state guidelines regarding class size, the Committee recommends that HCDE adopt a maximum Class Size Policy.

- G. ***Place a Family Reading Specialist in Every Elementary and Middle School*** – The members of the Reading Committee also recognize that parental involvement in reading is likely to be the cornerstone for being able to effect improvement in student reading scores.

This individual’s sole task and responsibility would be to work with and train parents to assist inside and outside the school with training children to read. Such training could be one-on-one in the home with the parent, or in the school as the parent is assisting with reading education.

### **Community - Establish a Comprehensive Community Reading Program**

It is essential that local governments, businesses, community groups, charitable foundations, the Hamilton County school system, and individuals come together to establish a single unified approach to stress reading and literacy within the community. This plan or entity should be tasked with the following:

- H. ***Educate and Engage the Community*** on the importance of being able to read at grade level throughout a child’s life and progress through school for: success in school, ability to earn more money, long term better health, and better workforce development.



Source: J. Trelease, *The Read Aloud Handbook*, Penguin Books (5<sup>th</sup> ed. 2001), p. 108



1. Educate parents and guardians on the necessity of reading aloud at least 20 minutes per day to their children
2. Educate businesses on the benefits of permitting employees to provide volunteer help to schools and pre-K/daycare facilities with their reading programs
3. Solicit private and public funding to meet resource objectives
4. Prepare/maintain a website dedicated to the Hamilton County Community Program for Reading (CPR). This website would act as the focal point for all reading and literacy initiatives in the community, especially as it pertains to children.

I. ***Engage the Childcare & Pre-K Community –***

1. Establish community-wide standards for testing and tracking the progress of all child care and pre-K students' reading abilities, in order to deliver the best-suited reading instruction to each child. This will require:

- a. Community embracement of birth through pre-K “reading aloud,” free libraries and other parent-focused reading programs;
- b. Adopt voluntary standards for reading aloud by at least 30 minutes per day to all daycare/pre-K children
- c. Provision of annual reading instruction to childcare and pre-K personnel regarding the methods for teaching toddlers to recognize letters and begin reading.



Photo: Courtesy of Terry Crow – 505-4429

2. Establish a certification program A component for establishing a Comprehensive Community Reading Program, the committee recommends that one umbrella entity be charged with creating a certification program for all childcare and pre-K care facilities with regard to its delivery of reading instruction to its children. (Similar to the “Star Program.”) This voluntary certification program is envisioned to be the benchmark by which all facilities would be judged. Compliance with the certification would permit a facility to advertise itself to the community as “***Reading Certified.***”

3. Promote the use of Guttering - Encourage all childcare and pre-K programs to install book “Gutters” in their facilities, in order to motivate children to “read” books.

J. ***Engage and Enlist the Media*** – Approach all media outlets with the necessity of this being a “community-wide campaign.”



Photo: Courtesy of Terry Crow – 505-4429

1. Educate all media outlets on the problem, the long-term effects of illiteracy, and the “ripple effects” on health, jobs and overall wellness of a community.
2. Obtain media commitment to feature ongoing Reading and Literacy campaign.
3. Develop and conduct a public information campaign to educate parents and the community about the detrimental long term effects of not teaching a child to read at grade level by grade 3.
4. Emphasize Reading Aloud – Get the message out for parents and family to read aloud at least 20 minutes per day to all children from birth to 5<sup>th</sup> grade.
5. Establish a “Radio Reader” program on local College-run Public Radio
6. Use creative Media to reach everyone in the Community. Ideas might include:
  - a. Reading tips and articles in the Newspaper
  - b. Parent “reading checklists” sent home by churches, childcare providers, community centers, etc.
  - c. Reading exercises and tips provided in grocery bag stuffers and on restaurant placemats
  - d. Enlisting child focused businesses, governmental offices, and public places of all kinds that cater to children (i.e., pediatrician offices, bookstores, restaurants, etc.) to install “reading corners” in their offices



K. ***Enhance Community Reading assets***

1. Enhance existing, or, establish new Reading centers in each neighborhood through schools, libraries and community centers.
2. Through the Reading Program (the umbrella organization) – provide a means for ordering books on line to be donated to schools in honor of a child’s birthday, etc.



Photo: Courtesy of Terry Crow – 505-4429

3. Explore the use of “books on tape” libraries within the community

**Form a Community-wide Strategic planning group to develop a clear picture of what is necessary to meet the 90% goal, beginning with these recommendations.**

- L. ***Composition*** - representatives of County and all City governments, HCDE, Literacy Coalition/Reading Foundation, Parents, business community, the preschool community, neighborhood associations/groups, local colleges and universities, and the media;
- M. ***Tasked to*** - evaluate and determine the financial needs, training requirements, people, reading resources, and reading programs necessary to accomplish the 90% goal.

#### 4. Implementation

##### CONCLUSION:

“There is nothing more important to the long-term success of this community and each of its citizens, than the ability of each child to read well, at grade level, by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.”

##### RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:

Empowering our children to read, is truly a joint effort that requires parents, childcare facilities, churches, businesses, neighbors and yes, the central administration, principals and teachers of our schools. But, *the task of teaching a child to read, starts with parents – in the home, long before a child starts kindergarten.* Our approach then, must engage the entire community and not just place the task of teaching reading skills on the Hamilton County School System.

##### ASSISTING PARTIES:

The media, can have the single greatest impact in helping shape the way parents, businesses, churches, and the community as a whole approach the task of teaching our children how to read well. If we are to be successful in our schools, we must change the environment leading up to the time when we send our children to begin their formal learning. And the single most important factor in improving our schools lies with the parents. Parents must be engaged, and active in helping their child learn the pre-skills necessary for them to have a chance of succeeding. The members of the Media help shape the focus and the topics of concern for our community, thus directly affecting how all parents can be engaged in this process.

##### RESULTS:

If the five essential skills to reading (phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) are developed to grade-level or above by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade, a child is much more likely to: succeed in school, go on to college or have a better opportunity for skilled employment, have fewer health problems, have fewer disciplinary problems, and have increased earning potential over their lifetime.

In order to timely implement these strategies, the Reading Subcommittee has developed the matrix displayed on the following pages, listing each recommended objective, responsible party, supportive/engaged group, resources required, and

recommended timeframe for implementation. We suggest that this matrix be completed by a strategic reading committee composed of members of the organizations listed in Appendix 3.

## Reading Enhancement Implementation Plan

	<i>Objective</i>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Supportive/engaged Groups</b>	<b>Required Resources</b>	<b>Recommended Timeframes</b>
I.	<b>HAMILTON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION</b>				
A	<i><b>Make Reading the No. 1 Priority</b></i>				
B	<i><b>Adopt and Implement Steps to meet the 90% Reading Goal</b></i>				
C	<i><b>Teach Teachers to Teach Reading</b></i>				
1)	Within the School District				
2)	Within Local Universities				
3)	Conduct a summer “Literacy Institute”				
D	<i><b>Adopt a Uniform Early Reading Assessment Tool</b></i>				
E	<i><b>Increase School Reading Resources</b></i>				
1)	In the Classroom				
2)	In School Libraries				
F	<i><b>Reduce Class Size</b></i>				
G	<i><b>Place a Family Reading Specialist in Every Elementary and Middle School</b></i>				
II.	COMMUNITY - ESTABLISH A COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY READING PROGRAM				
A	<i><b>Educate the community on - The Necessity for Enhancing Reading</b></i>				
1)	Educate Parents on Reading Aloud				
2)	Educate Businesses on Supporting Reading Initiatives				
3)	Solicit private and public funding				
4)	Prepare/maintain website dedicated to the Hamilton County Community Program for Reading (CPR)				
B	<i><b>Engage the Childcare &amp; Pre-K Community</b></i>				

<i>Objective</i>		Responsible Party	Supportive/engaged Groups	Required Resources	Recommended Timeframes
1)	Establish community-wide standards				
2)	Establish a “Reading Certification” program				
3)	Promote the use of Guttering				
C	<b><i>Engage and Enlist the Media</i></b>				
1)	Educate all media outlets				
2)	Obtain media commitment				
3)	Develop and conduct a public information campaign				
4)	Emphasize Reading Aloud				
5)	Establish a “Radio Reader” program				
6)	Use Creative Media				
D	<b><i>Enhance Community Reading assets</i></b>				
1)	Enhance existing or establish new Reading centers				
2)	Provide a Means for Book donation				
3)	Develop “Books on Tape” Libraries				
III.	<b>FORM COMMUNITY-WIDE STRATEGIC PLANNING GROUP TO DEVELOP A CLEAR PICTURE OF WHAT IS NECESSARY TO MEET THE 90% GOAL.</b>				

## Appendix 1

### **Members of the County Mayor's Education Task Force, Reading Subcommittee**

Grant Law – Businessman (*Chairman – Reading Subcommittee*)

Tim Andrews, Executive Director - Community Research Council

Emily Baker, Principal – East Side Elementary

Joan Barnes, Teacher – Thrasher Elementary

Kathy Campbell, Teacher – Lookout Valley Elementary

Dr. Richard Casavant, Dean – University of Tennessee Chattanooga School of Business and  
Commissioner – Hamilton County Commission

Peter T. Cooper, President – Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga

Jennifer Jackson, Vice President Programs – Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga

Wes Kliner – Attorney

Teletha McJunkin, BSW, MPA, Research Analyst, SETNIS

Stephanie Spencer, Director - Benwood Initiative, Public Education Foundation

Dr. Elaine Swafford, Executive Principal – Howard School for Academics and Technology

Beverly M. Trobaugh, Director – Children's Enrichment Center,  
First-Centenary United Methodist Church

Edna Varner, Senior Program Consultant - Public Education Foundation

Sabrina L. Walton, Educator – Hamilton County Department of Education

Sheila Young, Educator – Hamilton County Department of Education

## Appendix 2

### Bibliography of Selected Works - Read

- *The 90% Reading Goal*, **L. Fielding, N. Kerr, P. Rosier**, New Foundation Press (1998)
- *The Read Aloud Handbook*, **J. Trelease**, Penguin Books, (2001, 5<sup>th</sup> ed.)
- *Differentiated Instructional Strategies – One Size Doesn't Fit All*, **G. Gregory, S. Chapman**, Corwin Press (2002)
- *What Really Matters to Struggling Readers – Designing Research-Based Programs*, **R. Allington**, Addison-Wesley Publishers (2002)
- *Reading Magic*, **Mem Fox**, Harcourt, Inc. (2001)
- *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, **The National Reading Council, C. Snow, M.S. Burns, P. Griffin** (editors), National Academy Press (1998)
- *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children*, **B. Hart & T. Risley**, Brookes Publishing (5<sup>th</sup> ed. 2003)
- *Beginning to Read: Thinking and Learning about Print*, **M. Adams**
- *Overcoming Dyslexia: A New and Complete Science-Based Program for Overcoming Reading Problems at any Age Level*, **S. Shaywitz, M.D.**
- *Starting Out Right: A Guide to Promoting Children's Reading Success*, **M. S. Burns**
- *Reading With Meaning: Teaching Comprehension in the Primary Grades*, **D. Miller**
- *In the Company of Children*, **J. Hindley**
- *Mosaic of Thought: Teaching Comprehension in a Reader's Workshop*, **E. Oliver Keene & S. Zimmermann**
- *On Solid Ground: Strategies for Teaching Reading K-3*, **S. Taberski**
- *Strategies that Work: Teaching Comprehension to Enhance Understanding*, **S. Harvey**

### Selected Reading Performance Studies - Used/consulted

- **National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) – 2003 State Reading report**
- **Achievement-Test-Scores (TCAP) – (2002-2003) – Grades-3-8 – Hamilton County**
- **Southeast Tennessee Information Service (SETNIS) – Reading in Hamilton County 2003**

## Appendix 3

### Index of Community Reading Resources/Partners

Following is a non-exhaustive list of “Reading Resources” and groups or entities that within the community who emphasize or assist children, parents, and the community at large with reading and reading education:

All Elementary Schools of Hamilton County  
All High Schools of Hamilton County  
All Middle Schools of Hamilton County  
Allied Arts of Greater Chattanooga  
Alton Park Development Association  
Bethlehem Center  
Bicentennial Library  
Boys’ and Girls’ Club of Chattanooga  
Brainerd Baptist Church  
Brainerd Neighborhood Reading Center  
Bushtown Neighborhood Association  
Chattanooga Endeavors  
Chattanooga Literacy Coalition  
Chattanooga State Community College  
Child Care Resource Center  
City of Chattanooga  
City of Chattanooga Neighborhood Services  
Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga  
Concord Baptist Church  
East 5<sup>th</sup> Street Child Care Center  
East Chattanooga Neighborhood Reading Center  
East Lake Neighborhood Reading Center  
Family and Children’s Services  
First Baptist Church  
First Centenary United Methodist Church  
First Things First  
Girls Incorporated  
Goodwill Industries  
Hamilton County Baptist Association  
Hamilton County Department of Education  
Head Start  
Highland Park Neighborhood Association  
Highland Park Reading Center  
Hope for Chattanooga’s GLAD  
Inner City Ministries  
Job Corps of Chattanooga

Libraries – (various)  
Little Miss Mag Child Care Center  
Lyndhurst Foundation – Community Impact Fund  
Maurice Kirby Child Care Center  
Memorial Baptist Church  
Middle Valley Baptist Church  
MLK Neighborhood Reading Center  
North Chattanooga Neighborhood Reading Center  
Northside Neighborhood House  
Oak Grove Neighborhood Reading Center  
Parent’s Place  
Parents are First Teachers  
Partnership for Children  
Primera Church Hispanic Mission  
Pro Re Bona Day Care Center  
Public Education Foundation  
Read Aloud Chattanooga  
READ Chattanooga  
Roanoke Reading Center  
Salvation Army  
Senior Neighbors  
Shepherd Rec. Center – The Reading Room  
Signal Centers  
Signal Centers  
Southside Neighborhood Reading Center  
St. Elmo Ave. Baptist Church  
St. Elmo Neighborhood Reading Center  
Temple Baptist Church  
United Way- Invest in Children  
United Way of Chattanooga  
Urban League  
UTC Community Outreach Center  
Westside Neighborhood Reading Center  
Woodland Park Baptist Church  
Wyatt Recreation Center  
YMCA





**AMERICAN  
Educator**  
Spring 2003

**The Early Catastrophe**

The 30 Million Word Gap by Age 3

Betty Hart and Todd R. Risley

During the 1960's War on Poverty, we were among the many researchers, psychologists, and educators who brought our knowledge of child development to the front line in an optimistic effort to intervene early to forestall the terrible effects that poverty was having on some children's academic growth. We were also among the many who saw that our results, however promising at the start, washed out fairly early and fairly completely as children aged.

In one planned intervention in Kansas City, Kans., we used our experience with clinical language intervention to design a half-day program for the Turner House Preschool, located in the impoverished Juniper Gardens area of the city. Most interventions of the time used a variety of methods and then measured results with IQ tests, but ours focused on building the everyday language the children were using, then evaluating the growth of that language. In addition, our study included not just poor children from Turner House, but also a group of University of Kansas professors' children against whom we could measure the Turner House children's progress.

All the children in the program eagerly engaged with the wide variety of new materials and language-intensive activities introduced in the preschool. The spontaneous speech data we collected showed a spurt of new vocabulary words added to the dictionaries of all the children and an abrupt acceleration in their cumulative vocabulary growth curves. But just as in other early intervention programs, the increases were temporary.

We found we could easily increase the size of the children's vocabularies by teaching them new words. But we could not accelerate the rate of vocabulary growth so that it would continue beyond direct teaching; we could not change the developmental trajectory. However many new words we taught the children in the preschool, it was clear that a year later, when the children were in kindergarten, the effects of the boost in vocabulary resources would have washed out. The children's developmental trajectories of vocabulary growth would continue to point to vocabulary sizes in the future that were increasingly discrepant from those of the professors' children. We saw increasing disparity between the extremes--the fast vocabulary growth of the professors' children

and the slow vocabulary growth of the Turner House children. The gap seemed to foreshadow the findings from other studies that in high school many children from families in poverty lack the vocabulary used in advanced textbooks.

Rather than concede to the unmalleable forces of heredity, we decided that we would undertake research that would allow us to understand the disparate developmental trajectories we saw. We realized that if we were to understand how and when differences in developmental trajectories began, we needed to see what was happening to children at home at the very beginning of their vocabulary growth.

We undertook 2 1/2 years of observing 42 families for an hour each month to learn about what typically went on in homes with 1- and 2-year-old children learning to talk. The data showed us that ordinary families differ immensely in the amount of experience with language and interaction they regularly provide their children and that differences in children's experience are strongly linked to children's language accomplishments at age 3. Our goal in the longitudinal study was to discover what was happening in children's early experience that could account for the intractable difference in rates of vocabulary growth we saw among 4-year-olds.

### **Methodology**

Our ambition was to record "everything" that went on in children's homes--everything that was done by the children, to them, and around them. Because we were committed to undertaking the labor involved in observing, tape recording, and transcribing, and because we did not know exactly which aspects of children's cumulative experience were contributing to establishing rates of vocabulary growth, the more information we could get each time we were in the home the more we could potentially learn.

We decided to start when the children were 7-9 months old so we would have time for the families to adapt to observation before the children actually began talking. We followed the children until they turned three years old.

The first families we recruited to participate in the study came from personal contacts: friends who had babies and families who had had children in the Turner House Preschool. We then used birth announcements to send descriptions of the study to families with children of the desired age. In recruiting from birth announcements, we had two priorities. The first priority was to obtain a range in demographics, and the second was stability--we needed families likely to remain in the longitudinal study for several years. Recruiting from birth announcements allowed us to preselect families. We looked up each potential family in the city directory and listed those with such signs of permanence as owning their home and having a telephone. We listed families by sex of child and address because demographic status could be reliably associated with area of residence in this city at that time. Then we sent recruiting letters selectively in order to maintain the gender balance and the representation of socioeconomic strata.

Our final sample consisted of 42 families who remained in the study from beginning to end. From each of these families, we have almost 2 1/2 years or more of sequential

monthly hour-long observations. On the basis of occupation, 13 of the families were upper socioeconomic status (SES), 10 were middle SES, 13 were lower SES, and six were on welfare. There were African-American families in each SES category, in numbers roughly reflecting local job allocations. One African-American family was upper SES, three were middle, seven were lower, and six families were on welfare. Of the 42 children, 17 were African American and 23 were girls. Eleven children were the first born to the family, 18 were second children, and 13 were third or later-born children.

### What We Found

Before children can take charge of their own experience and begin to spend time with peers in social groups outside the home, almost everything they learn comes from their families, to whom society has assigned the task of socializing children. We were not surprised to see the 42 children turn out to be like their parents; we had not fully realized, however, the implications of those similarities for the children's futures.

We observed the 42 children grow more like their parents in stature and activity levels, in vocabulary resources, and in language and interaction styles. Despite the considerable range in vocabulary size among the children, 86 percent to 98 percent of the words recorded in each child's vocabulary consisted of words also recorded in their parents' vocabularies. By the age of 34-36 months, the children were also talking and using numbers of different words very similar to the averages of their parents (see table below).

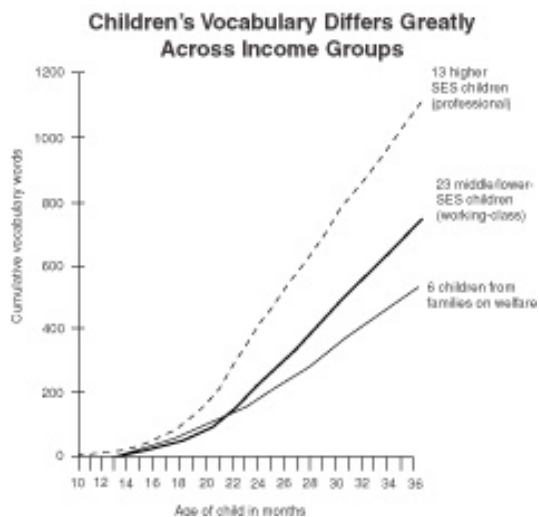
Families' Language and Use Differ Across Income Groups						
Families						
	<u>13 Professional</u>		<u>23 Working-class</u>		<u>6 Welfare</u>	
Measures Scores	& Parent	Child	Parent	Child	Parent	Child
Protest score <sup>a</sup>	41		31		14	
Recorded vocabulary size	2,176	1,116	1,498	749	974	525
Average utterances per hour <sup>b</sup>	487	310	301	223	176	168
Average different words per hour	382	297	251	216	167	149

<sup>a</sup> When we began the longitudinal study, we asked the parents to complete a vocabulary pretest. At the first observation each parent was asked to complete a form abstracted from the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT). We gave each parent a list of 46 vocabulary words and a series of pictures (four options per vocabulary word) and asked the parent to write beside each word the number of the picture that corresponded to the written word. Parent performance on the test was highly correlated with years of education ( $r = .57$ ).

<sup>b</sup> Parent utterances and different words were averaged over 13-36 months of child age. Child utterances and different words were averaged for the four observations when the children were 33-36 months old.

By the time the children were 3 years old, trends in amount of talk, vocabulary growth, and style of interaction were well established and clearly suggested widening gaps to come. Even patterns of parenting were already observable among the children. When we listened to the children, we seemed to hear their parents speaking; when we watched the children play at parenting their dolls, we seemed to see the futures of their own children.

We now had answers to our 20-year-old questions. We had observed, recorded, and analyzed more than 1,300 hours of casual interactions between parents and their language-learning children. We had dissembled these interactions into several dozen molecular features that could be reliably coded and counted. We had examined the correlations between the quantities of each of those features and several outcome measures relating to children's language accomplishments.



After all 1,318 observations had been entered into the computer and checked for accuracy against the raw data, after every word had been checked for spelling and coded and checked for its part of speech, after every utterance had been coded for syntax and discourse function and every code checked for accuracy, after random samples had been recoded to check the reliability of the coding, after each file had been checked one more time and the accuracy of each aspect verified, and after the data analysis programs had finally been run to produce frequency counts and

dictionary lists for each observation, we had an immense numeric database that required 23 million bytes of computer file space. We were finally ready to begin asking what it all meant.

It took six years of painstaking effort before we saw the first results of the longitudinal research. And then we were astonished at the differences the data revealed (see the graph at left).

Like the children in the Turner House Preschool, the three year old children from families on welfare not only had smaller vocabularies than did children of the same age in professional families, but they were also adding words more slowly. Projecting the developmental trajectory of the welfare children's vocabulary growth curves, we could see an ever-widening gap similar to the one we saw between the Turner House children and the professors' children in 1967.

While we were immersed in collecting and processing the data, our thoughts were concerned only with the next utterance to be transcribed or coded. While we were observing in the homes, though we were aware that the families were very different in lifestyles, they were all similarly engaged in the fundamental task of raising a child. All the families nurtured their children and played and talked with them. They all disciplined

their children and taught them good manners and how to dress and toilet themselves. They provided their children with much the same toys and talked to them about much the same things. Though different in personality and skill levels, the children all learned to talk and to be socially appropriate members of the family with all the basic skills needed for preschool entry.

### **Test Performance in Third Grade Follows**

#### **Accomplishments at Age 3**

We wondered whether the differences we saw at age 3 would be washed out, like the effects of a preschool intervention, as the children's experience broadened to a wider community of competent speakers. Like the parents we observed, we wondered how much difference children's early experiences would actually make. Could we, or parents, predict how a child would do in school from what the parent was doing when the child was 2 years old?

Fortune provided us with Dale Walker, who recruited 29 of the 42 families to participate in a study of their children's school performance in the third grade, when the children were nine to 10 years old.

We were awestruck at how well our measures of accomplishments at age 3 predicted measures of language skill at age 9-10. From our preschool data we had been confident that the rate of vocabulary growth would predict later performance in school; we saw that it did. For the 29 children observed when they were 1-2 years old, the rate of vocabulary growth at age 3 was strongly associated with scores at age 9-10 on both the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised (PPVT-R) of receptive vocabulary ( $r = .58$ ) and the Test of Language Development-2: Intermediate (TOLD) ( $r = .74$ ) and its subtests (listening, speaking, semantics, syntax).

Vocabulary use at age 3 was equally predictive of measures of language skill at age 9-10. Vocabulary use at age 3 was strongly associated with scores on both the PPVT-R ( $r = .57$ ) and the TOLD ( $r = .72$ ). Vocabulary use at age 3 was also strongly associated with reading comprehension scores on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS/U) ( $r = .56$ ).

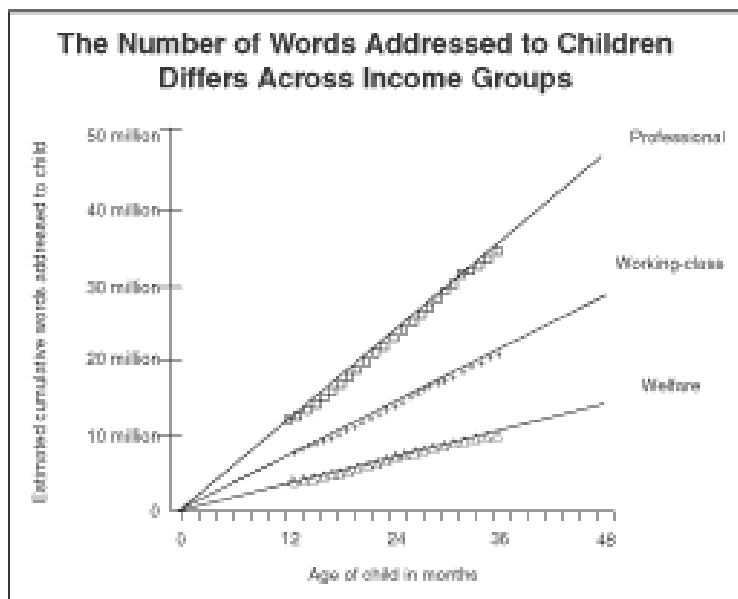
#### **The 30 Million Word Gap By Age 3**

All parent-child research is based on the assumption that the data (laboratory or field) reflect what people typically do. In most studies, there are as many reasons that the averages would be higher than reported as there are that they would be lower. But all researchers caution against extrapolating their findings to people and circumstances they did not include. Our data provide us, however, a first approximation to the absolute magnitude of children's early experience, a basis sufficient for estimating the actual size of the intervention task needed to provide equal experience and, thus, equal opportunities to children living in poverty. We depend on future studies to refine this estimate.

Because the goal of an intervention would be to equalize children's early experience, we need to estimate the amount of experience children of different SES groups might bring to an intervention that began in preschool at age 4. We base our estimate on the

remarkable differences our data showed in the relative amounts of children's early experience: Simply in words heard, the average child on welfare was having half as much experience per hour (616 words per hour) as the average working-class child (1,251 words per hour) and less than one-third that of the average child in a professional family (2,153 words per hour). These relative differences in amount of experience were so durable over the more than two years of observations that they provide the best basis we currently have for estimating children's actual life experience.

A linear extrapolation from the averages in the observational data to a 100-hour week (given a 14-hour waking day) shows the average child in the professional families with 215,000 words of language experience, the average child in a working-class family provided with 125,000 words, and the average child in a welfare family with 62,000 words of language experience. In a 5,200-hour year, the amount would be 11.2 million words for a child in a professional family, 6.5 million words for a child in a working-class family, and 3.2 million words for a child in a welfare family. In four years of such experience, an average child in a professional family would have accumulated experience with almost 45 million words, an average child in a working-class family would have accumulated experience with 26 million words, and an average child in a welfare family would have accumulated experience with 13 million words. By age 4, the average child in a welfare family might have 13 million fewer words of cumulative experience than the average child in a working-class family. This linear extrapolation is shown in the graph below.



But the children's language experience did not differ just in terms of the number and quality of words heard. We can extrapolate similarly the relative differences the data showed in children's hourly experience with parent affirmatives (encouraging words) and prohibitions. The average child in a professional family was accumulating 32 affirmatives and five prohibitions per hour, a

ratio of 6 encouragements to 1 discouragement. The average child in a working-class family was accumulating 12 affirmatives and seven prohibitions per hour, a ratio of 2 encouragements to 1 discouragement. The average child in a welfare family, though, was accumulating five affirmatives and 11 prohibitions per hour, a ratio of 1 encouragement to 2 discouragements. In a 5,200-hour year, that would be 166,000 encouragements to 26,000 discouragements in a professional family, 62,000 encouragements to 36,000 discouragements in a working-class family, and 26,000 encouragements to 57,000

discouragements in a welfare family.

Extrapolated to the first four years of life, the average child in a professional family would have accumulated 560,000 more instances of encouraging feedback than discouraging feedback, and an average child in a working-class family would have accumulated 100,000 more encouragements than discouragements. But an average child in a welfare family would have accumulated 125,000 more instances of prohibitions than encouragements. By the age of 4, the average child in a welfare family might have had 144,000 *fewer* encouragements and 84,000 *more* discouragements of his or her behavior than the average child in a working-class family.

Extrapolating the relative differences in children's hourly experience allows us to estimate children's cumulative experience in the first four years of life and so glimpse the size of the problem facing intervention. Whatever the inaccuracy of our estimates, it is not by an order of magnitude such that 60,000 words become 6,000 or 600,000. Even if our estimates of children's experience are too high by half, the differences between children by age 4 in amounts of cumulative experience are so great that even the best of intervention programs could only hope to keep the children in families on welfare from falling still further behind the children in the working-class families.

### **The Importance of Early Years Experience**

We learned from the longitudinal data that the problem of skill differences among children at the time of school entry is bigger, more intractable, and more important than we had thought. So much is happening to children during their first three years at home, at a time when they are especially malleable and uniquely dependent on the family for virtually all their experience, that by age 3, an intervention must address not just a lack of knowledge or skill, but an entire general approach to experience.

Cognitively, experience is sequential: Experiences in infancy establish habits of seeking, noticing, and incorporating new and more complex experiences, as well as schemas for categorizing and thinking about experiences. Neurologically, infancy is a critical period because cortical development is influenced by the amount of central nervous system activity stimulated by experience. Behaviorally, infancy is a unique time of helplessness when nearly all of children's experience is mediated by adults in one-to-one interactions permeated with affect. Once children become independent and can speak for themselves, they gain access to more opportunities for experience. But the amount and diversity of children's past experience influences which new opportunities for experience they notice and choose.

Estimating, as we did, the magnitude of the differences in children's cumulative experience before the age of 3 gives an indication of how big the problem is. Estimating the hours of intervention needed to equalize children's early experience makes clear the enormity of the effort that would be required to change children's lives. And the longer the effort is put off, the less possible the change becomes. We see why our brief, intense efforts during the War on Poverty did not succeed. But we also see the risk to our nation and its children that make intervention more urgent than ever.

Betty Hart is professor of Human Development at the University of Kansas and senior scientist at the Schiefelbusch Institute for Life Span Studies. Todd R. Risley is professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Alaska Anchorage and director of Alaska's Autism Intensive Early Intervention Project. The two have collaborated on research projects for more than 35 years. This article is excerpted with permission from *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experiences of Young American Children*, Copyright 1995, Brookes; [www.brookespublishing.com](http://www.brookespublishing.com), 1-800-638-3775; \$29.00.

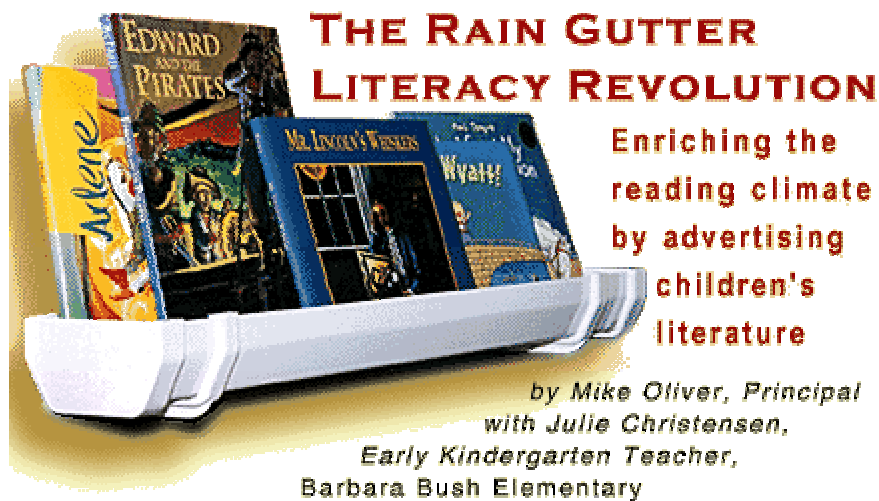
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The following paper examines the value of a print-rich reading climate and the positive effect of attracting physical characteristics.

**W**e have all heard the cliché, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink." Many times, I have heard teachers refer to this adage to describe their frustrations as they struggle to motivate their students to spend more time reading and to assist them in the development of a reading habit. These comments are from teachers who are well acquainted with the reading research that supports that children get better at reading by reading.

Perhaps we can't "make" the horse drink, but we can do things, such as enhancing the reading environment, to increase the likelihood that students will develop a thirst for books and spend more time reading.

One way to enhance the reading environment is by turning to the gutters — rain gutters, that is.



For years, Jim Trelease, international consultant and author of *The Read-Aloud Handbook* (2001), has advocated that books need to be advertised in classrooms and libraries in the same fashion that cookies and cereal boxes are displayed in the grocery stores — with the cover facing out.



to be advertised in book stores with the cover facing out, because is the product.

The publisher provides the book seller with what is called a *display allowance*. This is money paid to a retailer so that each store in the chain will prominently feature a specific title for a particular period of time. This practice began in the supermarkets as a means of getting them to display a product at

the end of an isle or on the middle of the shelf at eye level to attract the buyer's attention. According to a corporate manager for a prominent supermarket chain, this practice has been in existence for many years and is very important to the merchandiser. His concluding comment during an interview — "It has great impact!"

This custom has taken over the online book selling world as well. If you see a book featured on the Internet, it is due to display allowances. The display allowance practice has become widespread to the point where now, if you see a title's cover in a chain store, you can be sure the publisher paid extra for it.

Trelease (2001) recently presented the idea of using rain gutters, as a cost effective approach to displaying books in the classroom, at a full day workshop for teachers in Phoenix, Arizona. Like many other participants, I was motivated to return to my building to start installing rain gutters. Before presenting the idea to teachers, I chose to model the idea first, starting with my own office.

Most teachers were eager to participate, while a few were a bit skeptical and hesitant to give up valuable wall space. David Johnson, fourth grade teacher, expressed it this way: "When I was first approached with the rain gutter idea, I thought it was the dumbest idea I'd heard yet in education. And I was wrong! First, it entirely changed the atmosphere of my classroom. The covers added a warmth and excitement that wasn't there with a wall covered with teacher-made material or posters. The school year then started and the books 'flew' off the shelves. I've been teaching a long time and my students have never read so much. Was I ever wrong about the gutters!"

This study provides testimony from teachers, principals, students, librarians and parents who have become part of the Rain Gutter Literacy Revolution and can attest that the practice of displaying books in gutters encourages reading and assists in the development of good reading habits.

There is a very large body of research that documents the relationship between a book cover and book selection. **Carter (1988)** and **Kragler and Nolley (1996)** reported that illustrations on the cover or in the book were two of the top factors in book selections. Additionally, **Vandergift (1980)** stated that the cover of a book attracts people's attention. 'Most children (and adults) are more likely to select an attractive looking book than one that is dull in appearance and gives no clue to its contents.' Through such observations, one might ask why we don't see the majority of books in libraries and classrooms with the covers facing outward.



**Gerlach and Rinehart (1992)** stated, "while it is important that teachers start with children's interests in promoting independent reading, teachers should go one step further and find ways to help their students determine whether a book is worth reading by examining cover clues." Children have greater opportunities to use cover clues when they reside in print-rich environments with books displayed in rain gutters.

**McQuillan, (1998)** noted that "the amount of free voluntary reading that students engage in is closely related to students having ready availability of books in their environments. Students who have easy access to books tend to read more."

**Morrow (1982)** reported that good kindergarten teachers know just what the book sellers and grocers have discovered while advertising their products: When library corners have 'attracting features,' posters, bulletin boards, and displays related to children's literature, children show more interest in books."

According to **Coody (1997)** and **Huck (1976)**, "the effort that goes into making the classroom library an inviting spot will pay rich dividends in reading achievement and interest." This study will attempt to provide further support to this powerful statement with testimony from several educators who have discovered the same relationship between an enriched classroom library and student achievement and interest.

For many years, Jim Trelease, before mentioned, has traveled all over the world promoting the relationship between the *print* climate and *reading* achievement. He best describes this irrefutable relationship in the following manner: "There is a strange phenomenon that whenever students' scores drop, it is echoed by an outcry for school and teacher reform and higher standards. Yet there is no similar outburst when the scores are posted for the Winter Olympics and the African, Middle-Eastern, and South American teams finish out of the money — *every* time! Yet no one bats an eye in those countries. Of course, we all understand the Olympic situation: Countries like Norway, Canada, Austria, Russia, and the U.S. dominate the Winter games because their youngsters grow up with continual access to the 'climate' of winter sports — ice and snow. Conversely, athletes residing where they never or seldom have ice or snow will seldom have the skating or skiing skills to win. How much of a chance do you think the Israeli luge team has against Sweden's?"

"Simply put, it's the 'climate.'"

Data collected for this study comes from five sources:

Surveys were administered to teachers, librarians and principals at five elementary schools within the Mesa Public School District where books are currently displayed using rain gutters. Informal interviews with eight intermediate level students were conducted where the students were asked to describe the influence of rain gutter book displays in their classrooms. Parents of elementary school age children were also informally interviewed to describe the effect of placing rain gutter book displays in the bedrooms of their youngsters. Nineteen teachers, five principals, four librarians, eight intermediate level students and three parents represent the subjects for this study.

**W**ith 19 teachers surveyed, 19 (100%) reported that their students experienced an increased interest and excitement for reading because of the more visible presentation of the books in rain gutters. It was also reported by 16 of the 19 teachers surveyed (84%) that

the books displayed in rain gutters were more frequently checked out than the books displayed in more traditional settings (shelves, book carts, etc.). The 3 who did not report a more frequent usage stated that all classroom library books were displayed in gutters so there was nothing to compare against.



Following are comments from individual subjects describing the effect of rain gutter book displays in various print environments.

Scott Ritter, grade 2 teacher, describes the effects of books displayed with the cover facing outward in the following manner: "In the seven years that I have been teaching, I have amassed a classroom library of well over 1,000 books. The sheer number of books in my library posed quite a problem.

Books were stored on shelves in such a way that students were not able to tell anything about the book from looking at the spine. Books would often remain at the bottom of the pile and not be read for quite a while. Other times, I would be looking for a specific book to read, or a student would be looking for a particular book, and they would be unable to find it."

"That all changed when rain gutters were installed to display our classroom books. Previously, I would only be able to make one half of my classroom library available to students since there was not enough room. Now all of my books are displayed in rain gutters."

"Students now have more choice when selecting books: all the books are out and students can now see the covers and make better choices. Compared to last year with no rain gutters, students this year have shown much more interest when selecting books. Many times, they are attracted to an unfamiliar book by looking at the cover. They pick up books with covers that interest them, flip through it, and then make their decision. Since students are making better decisions when selecting books, when they have independent reading time, they are more likely to be on task reading."

Molly Thede, grade 4 teacher, reports that her students use her classroom library as a primary source for book access since installing rain gutters: "This is the first year I have had rain gutters in my classroom. I have always emphasized the joy of reading as part of my instructional day. Before the rain gutters, the children read more books from home or from the school library, whereas now they are more likely to read a book from my classroom library. This can be attributed in part to the rain gutters and the more visually appealing display of classroom library books."

Abbie Simpson, grade 2 teacher, noted that her students place a greater value on their free voluntary reading time since installing rain gutters in her classroom. She said it this way:

"When entering my room for the very first time, children and adults gravitate toward my reading corner where my classroom library is displayed in rain gutters. Children and their parents curl up on pillows and begin reading books together during "Meet the Teacher"

**A**gatherings. I have never experienced that when books were placed on shelves with only the spine showing. The inviting pictures on the front covers of books definitely entice readers. I know for a fact that the books displayed in the gutters are read more frequently than those on the shelves because they are wearing out much faster. All children in my room seem to love to read. If anyone interrupts their free reading time, they become agitated. You can hear a pin drop during this special time. I attribute this to the gutters!"

Terri Caves, grade 3 teacher, also noticed an increased interest for daily silent sustained reading. She attributes the change to books displayed in rain gutters. "My experience with rain gutters has proven to be worthwhile. I have found that my students are very aware of every book that is on display. If a book is out of the reach of a student, he or she will ask for help in obtaining it. This confirms that all of the books are being considered. I truly believe that the presentation of books in rain gutters has enhanced the reading program. This year, for the first time, my students have requested a second daily Drop Everything and Read time!"

grade 3 teacher also reported that books displayed with the covers out impacted student interest in daily free voluntary reading: "I didn't see much student interest in books when they were accessible only on a cart and on shelves. Now that my books are displayed in rain gutters, I see a whole different attitude and excitement about books. They can see what they're choosing. Before gutters, they didn't 'love' free reading time. Now they complain that we don't have enough of it! My students were asked to write a letter to me describing what they like about our class and what they would like to change. Most said they'd like more reading time. Wow! I never got that response before!"

Janet Cox, grade 1 teacher, reported that children respond favorably to a book displayed with the cover facing out versus the more traditional display on a shelf with only the spine being visible. Janet noted: "The inviting book covers are very 'eye-appealing' and call out to be read. I am truly an advocate of displaying books in rain gutters. I can attest to the fact that when the children can see the cover clearly, the books jump out at them to be read and shared. The spine of the book is the least attractive part of a book. If we want children to develop a love of reading, writing and illustrating, what better way to develop their talents than by sharing the talents of others. The illustrations invite the reader inside. Yahoo for rain gutters!"

Keegan, a grade 4 student, is an avid reader who appears in my office daily before and after school or during recess periods to check out books from my personal collection on display in rain gutters. Her comments support what Janet previously recognized with her primary youngsters. When asked why she so frequently visits my office as opposed to the library, she responded: "You can only see the spine of books in the library. In your office, you can see the books better and you're able to tell if you will like the book or not. You also don't have to turn your head to read the titles as you walk down the aisles. Your books say, 'Grab me! Take me home and read me! Hey, pick me!'"

Andie, a classmate of Keegan's in grade 4, said it this way: "I like the classroom library display better (books displayed in gutters) because you don't have to go to a computer to look up the book."



Shannon, another frequent visitor to my office for books, noted, "You can see the books better in your office. The books are right in front of your face! I look at the cover to see which books look good. I look at the cover and then read the title."

A grade 6 teacher said this about the value of displaying books with the cover facing out: "Even though 'you can't judge a book by its cover,' kids do. Visually, books displayed in rain gutters are easier to focus on and can plainly see as opposed to twisting your neck sideways to read the spine."

Connie Walters, grade 1 teacher, added: "I think readers of any age show a stronger interest finding and reading books when he or she has a cover facing them."

Jen Grayard, grade 5 teacher, related the following: "The ability to see the cover of a book really sparks a child's interest. Before installing the rain gutters, the kids would pull just any book off the shelf because they weren't very interested in their selection during free reading time. Now with the books in gutters, students look at a book cover to see if the book appeals to them, then read the back cover to see what the book is all about. The cover actually encourages them to grab the book and look it over carefully."

Gloria Adams, grade 5 teacher, reports the occurrence of atypical behavior in her classroom since installing rain gutters: "This is the first year that I have displayed my books in rain gutters. Some surprising things have happened. Students have come to me and have asked to organize the books by Newbery Award winners. Then they wanted to organize them by author. The students seem to be drawn toward the rain gutter display."

Comments from the elementary school principals surveyed support that rain gutter book displays had a positive influence on the school-wide reading climate at their schools. One principal noted that "the effect of installing gutters throughout the school was unifying and motivating for a school reading focus." Another principal reported that "the display of books in rain gutters provide more opportunity for choice and promotes greater interest in reading."

Of the 4 librarians surveyed, 2 reported that the rain gutter displays in the library experienced an increase in circulation when compared to those housed on shelves. These same two librarians also reported that student interest in reading has increased since installing rain gutters.

One of the librarians reporting an adverse effect on circulation noted: "Our students are trained to search on computers and then locate their books. When you have too many displays it complicates the search process for students. Sometimes when books are displayed, they are not easy to find, students get frustrated and don't check out books. Libraries need to have books that are easily accessible. I have seen a drop in circulation in certain grades because of very large classroom libraries, students reporting to the principal to check out books and the school library doesn't have the circulation that they want. More funds need to go towards books in the library instead of the classroom."

**S**urprisingly, parents have noticed the effect of rain gutter book displays on the reading climate at school and have embraced the concept with gutter displays of their own in their youngster's bedrooms.

The following letter was received from a parent who understands the relationship between the reading climate and success in reading:

Dear Mr. Oliver,

I am writing this letter to let you know that we have implemented your idea to use rain gutters to hold our children's books and that it has been a tremendous success.

Our children's literature library at home consists of over 150 books. In the past, we have had great difficulty storing this many books in an effective manner. There were a number of times, when our boys would want to hear a specific book, but due to the number of books we had, and the manner in which they were stored, we would be unable to find the book requested. We also discovered that our children were becoming bored during reading time because they were reading the same books each time. Although they had many books, they were not able to select new and interesting books because all their books were crammed into our bookcase.

This parent, as described in the following letter, has formed a possible relationship between the reading environment in her home and vocabulary development:

Dear Mike,

I am writing this letter to thank you for a wonderful idea you gave me. After a recent visit to your office, I couldn't help but notice the books that were displayed from floor to ceiling. The books were displayed with the covers facing forward and it visually made a tremendous impact on me. When I inquired about it you went on to tell me it was a simple rain gutter that you had mounted on the wall. You gave me the grocery store analogy about how cereal boxes and other products are displayed in the same manner on the shelves in supermarkets,

That made so much sense to me!

Well, I have installed the inexpensive rain gutter "shelving" in my daughter's room and it has made a tremendous difference in her reading! Her books were in a cute little bucket and she would want to read her books about every other day and usually just one or two. Since I put up the gutters and have all her books facing outward, we read about 4-5 books every day! It's amazing. Within the last week it seems as though her vocabulary development and memory has expanded threefold. She remembers a song I sing once and she then sings it back to me. I don't know if all of this is because of the increase in reading or not, but I wished I would have put the books out earlier. Thank you for passing along this great idea. I have already started telling all the other parents I know.

Sincerely,

## Summary

Students get better at reading by reading. They read more when they reside in environments where they have greater access to reading materials. Students show a greater interest in reading when books are displayed in an inviting fashion with the covers exposed. The cover of a book has a significant effect on a child's motivation to pick up the book and read it. Although this formula is quite simple and it doesn't require an enormous investment of a costly software program to operate, the effects are powerful and proven by research to have a significant influence on reading achievement.

**McQuillan (1998)** emphasizes the importance of the print climate while revering the critical role that the teacher plays in the reading process: "I do not wish to argue that simply providing books is all that is needed for schools to succeed, what some have referred to as the 'garden of literacy' approach. Teaching is much more than physical resources, and no progress can be made without qualified and sensitive teachers. But just as we would not ask a doctor to heal without medicine, so we should not ask teachers and schools to teach without the materials to do so. Reading material is basic to all education, and providing a rich supply of reading material to children of all ages, as well as a place and time to read, is the first step to bridging the gap between poor and good readers."

It is absolutely critical to move beyond the focus of teaching a child "how to read." Teaching them how to read is not enough, because they can "choose" not to. Regie Routman describes what can happen in a child's life when "the basics" are put in a literacy context of wonderful books, stories and poems — "when teachers truly believe that all kids can and must learn — and so they do — when they read, read, read, all day long for the joy of it and to make sense of the world; when kids write every day on topics they're interested in and publish texts that all their friends and family value and can't wait to read; and when test scores of struggling readers soar — for the first time ever — and lots of people take notice and realize, 'We're on to something here.' It's the best school story of all, kids becoming readers and writers for their own purposes — choosing to read and write for pleasure and information in their free time and all the time, in and out of school, because they want to."



For children to become successful readers, to read for pleasure and purpose, to read to broaden their perspective of the world in which we live, to read to make informed decisions and come to new understandings, they must have instant access to books. A love of reading is the greatest educational gift that we can offer a child.

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### **Vocational Education Subcommittee Report**

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#### **1. Summary**

This subcommittee's charge was to look at Vocational Education and where we think it needs to go. Members of this subcommittee visited Red Bank and East Ridge high schools to observe what they had done with academies. We also drew on the resources of the members of this subcommittee for recommendations.

#### **2. Findings**

We found that previous efforts in Vocational Education have not been successful in achieving the desired outcomes sought not only by business and industry but by students as well. Many programs became dumping grounds for students that did not "fit" into the typical course of study. Career and Technical education has suffered as a result of this stigma. Also noted were significantly low numbers of students seeking employment, post-secondary training or apprenticeships associated with their vocational courses taken in high school. Students were not being placed in an appropriate or productive environment when they leave Career and Technology training.

Any academy must have a "job needs" in an industry.

#### **3. Recommendations**

This subcommittee supports the current high school reform efforts and recommends that the Academy concept be adopted, as it is at Red Bank and East Ridge, i.e., a small learning community within the high school. These schools have implemented a unique approach, in that they have integrated academic and technical training (Voc Ed). This has been done with help from the industries that these Academies represent.

#### **4. Implementation**

- First we must get industry involved and they must have a “Champion” to help with that Academy. Contact organizations such as CMA, AGC, Home Builders, major health care, the Chamber of Commerce, the list can be very long on who would want to help and could provide some kind of recruitment base to draw from.
- Principals must buy into the academy for it to be successful.
- Teachers and technical instructors must also be committed to the academy.
- Parents must support and buy into the academy.
- The industry must bring their expertise into the Academy and facilitate the merger of academic and the technical training, so that the modified curriculum is a reflection of that industry.
- We must provide placement for students during their high school experience.
- We need to set up articulation agreements with CSCC, UTC and existing apprentice programs.
- Have the leaders of our community, mayors, college presidents, etc., hold “round table” meetings to promote this concept.
- Put in place a three- to four-year strategic plan not only to have Academies in place, but to eliminate “Voc Ed” only schools.
- We need a commitment from industry to place the students in the work place when their training is complete.

#### **5. Funding**

- There will be a need for staff development.
- In-kind help should be available from industry.
- Book and other materials relevant to that industry will be required.
- Equipment and useable materials are necessary.

## **6. Staffing**

- If the face of Vocational Education is to change, as we are recommending, then additional staff must be added. We do not know what kind of structure needs to be put in place, but we do recognize that one individual will not be able to do what is needed.